

SOCCER

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WILL IT BE 12?

By John Economos

Despite the strong and vocal opposition from the current 16 member clubs of the National Soccer League, the Board of Commissioners of Soccer Australia last Sunday afternoon firmly stood its ground on its initial decision to ruthlessly reduce the League, scuttling four teams from the competition next season, blatantly ignoring the painful pleas for a 12 month deferral by all the existing clubs.

The anticipated 12 month stay of execution was however flatly knocked on the head last Sunday by Soccer Australia.

Soccer Australia's Commissioners met with the 16 NSL clubs last Saturday in Sydney at the Airport Hilton Hotel to discuss the proposed reforms formulating new benchmarks as criteria for admission into next season's National League.

The reforms included:
A reduction in the number of teams in the League from 16 to 12.

The introduction of a 10 team Second Division National League.

Promotion and relegation between the two Leagues, but only after the second year.

Last Saturday the head delegates from each of the 16 clubs, accepted in general the reforms, but only on the basis that:

a) The relaunch of the NSL must be deferred by 12 months.

b) The NSL Executive to undertake a consultative process with all the clubs plus stakeholders to finalise the criteria for adoption by Soccer Australia with implementation of the reforms commencing in season 2001/2002.

c) Before final acceptance of a Second Division National League, a feasibility study should be undertaken.

All this had been clearly understood and accepted by all the clubs in their meeting with Soccer Australia's Chairman Mr Basil Scarsella last Saturday.

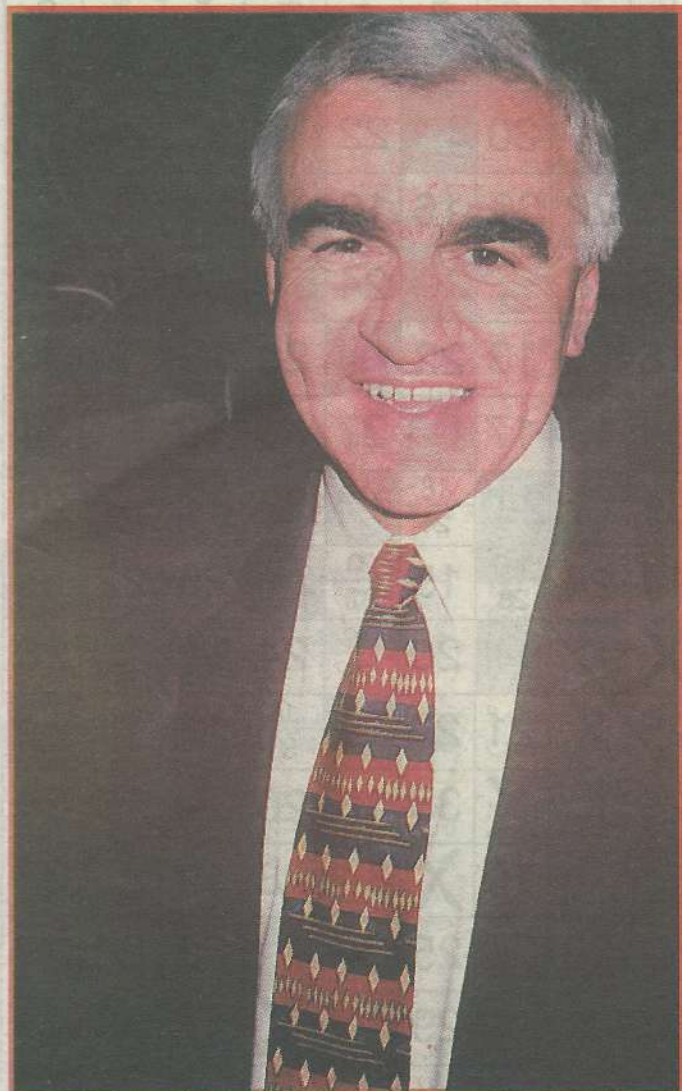
Last Sunday however, Soccer Australia shocked the 16 clubs when it stood firmly on its initial directives, as well as the abrupt time frame, totally ignoring the recommendations expressed by the 16 NSL clubs just 24 hours before.

Feeling somewhat prematurely threatened, Sydney United's president, Mr Marko Franovic was one of the first to lash out with: "This decision by Soccer Australia is racially motivated."

"It seems there is a plan to rid the League of all ethnic clubs, the same clubs that have done so much for Soccer in Australia over the past 50 years."

"We are very disappointed because last Saturday the 16 clubs had all agreed that the final decision was to be delayed for one year," stated Mr Franovic last Sunday afternoon.

(More on Page 3.)



Basil Scarsella: Soccer Australia's unyielding Chairman.



Marko Franovic: Sydney United's very concerned president.



WIN MANCHESTER
UNITED VIDEO

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NSL IN CRISIS

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THE GOOD OIL ...

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COLOUR POSTER

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PLAYER OF THE YEAR POINTS
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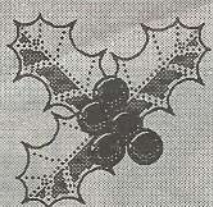
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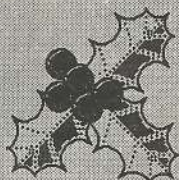
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all readers and their
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SEE PAGE 21 FOR DETAILS

|  | Adelaide Force | Auckland Kingz | Brisbane | Canberra | Carlton | Gippsland | Marconi | Melbourne K | Newcastle | Northern Spirit | Parramatta | Perth Glory | Sth Melbourne | Sydney Olympic | Sydney United | Wollongong |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| Adelaide Force | X | 2-3 13 | 20 | 15 | 0-0 | 32 | 19 | 34 | 18 26 | 30 | 2-1 | 22 | 1-1 | 28 | 24 | 1-2 |
| Auckland Kingz | 27 31 | X | 33 | 14 | 0-3 | 1-1 | 29 | 3-3 | 22 | 26 | 16 | 18 | 1-0 | 24 | 20 | 3-3 24 |
| Brisbane Strikers | 2-1 | 19 | X | 21 | 1-1 | 0-1 34 | 17 | 15 | 28 | 2-2 32 | 3-1 | 24 | 5-1 | 30 | 26 | 13 |
| Canberra Cosmos | 3-0 | 32 | 0-1 | X | 24 28 | 19 | 34 | 18 | 1-2 | 13 | 22 | 1-1 | 26 | 0-1 1-3 | 7 | 30 |
| Carlton | 23 | 15 | 25 | 2-0 5-1 | X | 1-1 | 21 | 2-1 | 13 | 17 | 1-3 | 27 | 30 32 | 19 | 3-1 | 34 |
| Gippsland Falcons | 14 | 28 | 16 29 | 33 | 20 | X | 0-2 | 31 | 1-0 | 2-0 | 18 24 | 0-1 | 22 | 0-1 | 1-1 | 26 |
| Marconi Stallions | 33 | 0-3 | 18 | 16 | 0-4 | 30 | X | 14 | 24 | 1-0 28 | 15 | 20 31 | 2-0 | 26 | 22 | 1-0 |
| Melbourne Knights | 16 | 30 | 0-1 | 17 | 22 | 13 | 32 | X | 3-0 | 0-1 | 20 | 0-3 26 | 24 | 2-1 | 1-0 33 | 28 |
| Newcastle Breakers | 1-1 17 | 1-1 | 2-1 | 27 | 31 | 23 | 2-3 | 25 | X | 21 | 29 | 3-2 | 16 33 | 15 | 14 | 2-2 |
| Northern Spirit | 0-3 | 3-2 | 14 22 | 31 | 18 | 27 | 25 1-1 | 29 | 0-2 | X | 33 | 16 | 20 | 0-1 | 15 | 24 |
| Parramatta Power | 21 | 34 | 23 | 2-3 | 26 | 1-1 17 | 1-1 | 2-1 | 0-1 | 19 | X | 3-1 | 28 | 13 | 1-1 30 | 32 |
| Perth Glory | 0-0 | 17 | 1-2 | 23 | 4-2 | 15 | 3-3 13 | 6-1 21 | 30 | 34 | 25 | X | 3-1 | 32 | 28 | 19 |
| South Melbourne | 25 | 21 | 27 | 2-2 | 1-2 14 | 3-0 | 23 | 3-0 | 19 34 | 2-0 | 29 | 4-2 | X | 17 | 31 | 15 |
| Sydney Olympic | 2-1 | 1-2 | 2-0 | 20 29 | 33 | 25 | 2-1 | 27 | 2-2 | 23 | 31 | 14 | 18 | X | 34 | 1-1 21 |
| Sydney United | 1-0 | 2-1 | 0-0 | 25 | 29 | 21 | 1-2 | 19 23 | 32 | 0-2 | 1-2 27 | 0-1 | 13 | 16 | X | 18 |
| Wollongong Wolves | 29 | 23 25 | 31 | 3-0 | 16 | 2-0 | 27 | 1-2 | 20 | 3-0 | 14 | 33 | 2-1 | 0-4 22 | 17 | X |

Numbers indicate which round the match will be played in. Home teams listed vertically.

SOCCER AUSTRALIA POWERS AHEAD

By John Economos

SOCCER AUSTRALIA last Sunday made it very clear it would forge full steam ahead next season with its compact National League of just 12 teams, despite the threats already circulating of pending litigation by one, or possibly even four, of the yet to-be named clubs to be ostracised.

Sydney United's chief, Mr Marko Franovic has already threatened that his Club would launch an immediate legal battle against Soccer Australia



Graham Arnold: A former Sydney United player.

should United be targeted and scuttled from next season's National League.

"We have already received legal advice on how to fight Soccer Australia, if need be," stressed the United president.

Already it's been speculated of the strong possibility that the four, (yet to be determined), clubs faced with being scuttled from the League, could immediately unite to launch a 'class action' against Soccer Australia.

Four clubs will be thrown out of the League that fail to shape up to the recently released and most stringent criteria.

The new benchmarks set by Soccer Australia that NSL clubs have to meet to qualify for a license and admittance to the League next season, in all honesty are most unrealistic.

The benchmarks documented and released only early last week, have already struck great fear through most of the 16 clubs.

Sydney United, commonly being speculated as one of the four unfortunate clubs to be axed from the League, deserves sympathy.

One can not help but feel for United should it ultimately be culled from the ratified 'reformed League'.

In recent years, United has spawned and supplied more players to our four national squads than most



Mark Bosnich: Started at Sydney United.

other clubs in the League.

Readily coming to mind are such names as Bosnich, Kalac, Savor, Moric, Popovic, Zelic, Mark Babic, Rudan, Plesa, Vrkic, J. Culina, Seal, Zdrilic, Bilokapic, Foster, Burns, Slater, Arnold, Griffiths, Milicic, Sterjovski and Santalab.

As for club honours, United has a proud record since joining the League.

They were Grand Finalist in 1988, 1997 and again last season, plus finished first past the post in 1986, 97 and 99.

The benchmarks are not only unrealistic, but simultaneously harsh.

Soccer Australia's stringent new League 'benchmarks':

- The League to comprise 12 clubs playing three rounds.

- Soccer Australia to announce the 12 clubs accepted into the new compact National League by June 12th 2000.

- Each Club will be granted a license, to be annually reviewed.

- Final assessment based on financial criteria and marketing criteria, plus current club's success in meeting current criteria.

- The League to provide a maximum of one team each from ACT, Northern NSW, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and New Zealand.

- A maximum of eight teams between NSW and

Victoria, in case two clubs from other states fail to meet the new criteria.

- All applications to be received by the League by 31st March 2000.

- All teams must have working capital of at least \$3 million with the capacity to absorb operating losses to \$1 million per season for at least three seasons.

- Each team to have the ability to generate \$1.5 million minimum revenue in the first year, rising to \$3 million by the fifth year.

- Revenue from gates to be at least \$500,000 in the first year rising to \$900,000 by year five.

- All grounds to have a minimum capacity of 10,000, including 5,000 seated.



Ned Zelic: Made his name at Sydney United.

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The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

CLUB MARCONI, almost from Day One, has always gone about doing things with style.

Real style. Whether it's looking after its players, Members, official visiting teams, dignitaries or even the Media, Club Marconi's P.R. has been nothing short of immaculate, and always done with style.

Almost every international team that has ever come to Sydney, invariably has tasted the 'Marconi-hospitality of excellence at 'the Palace'.

Mega teams such as Juventus, A.C. Milan, Vissel Kobe (Japan) plus many of our own Australian national squads, have all tasted Marconi's very fine style of hospitality.

The Marconi senior players all mixed with the kids to have a chat and all made themselves available to sign autographs for the young supporters.

Tomorrow (Wednesday) at mid-day, it's the Sydney Soccer media's turn to be.

All of Sydney's Soccer media have been invited to Marconi's 'Pre Christmas Thank You Luncheon'.

It's all style and so professional. Other clubs take note.

WHILST approximately an alarming 80% of our NSL clubs are severely cash-starved, the heartless Players' Union this season has already 'legislated' that all clubs employing their member-players on a semi professional basis, shall not be able to demand of them to

Yet the Union insists on further 'juicing' of the already insolvent clubs, by forcing heavier financial demands on them.

NSL players, despite what some of our many irresponsible club administrators believe, are well over paid, especially in contrast to what they are able to 'pull' through the gates.

One may say, "but yes, that's always been the case". 'Good Oil's' answer, is 'Yes, that's always been the case, but, and a very big but, in past years the actual cash-shortages have been, percentage wise, much less.

Today, those negative cash percentages have rocketed.

One NSL club this month, has already released it's balance sheet to its



By John Economos

'Good Oil' can only think, and see, only two clubs in the entire League that are, for now, 'Golden Geese'.

A WELL KNOWN left-footed midfielder, is again causing problems for his club with his negative and somewhat enigmatic attitude.

Recently his team was struggling-(in fact getting walloped), in the first session of an NSL match.

At half time the 25-year old 'problem child' marched into the dressing rooms and declared himself 'injured'.

In temper, he ripped off his shirt.

Of course there was no 'injury'.

Just another case of having spat the dummy'.

Despite the Club's hierarchy having been previously warned not to sign him up because of his erratic, and unacceptable attitude, the Club's previous president still went ahead and extended the 'problem child' a contract.

They never learn from the pros.

Now said 'problem child' is showing, (again), his true 'professional' colours.

What 'problem child' is totally unaware of, (as yet), is the fact that the Club's new coach has a very, very short fuse.

Please stand by for an explosion.

The Club's captain, a non nonsense guy, stated to 'good Oil':

"Enough is enough and I can't believe in him or trust him anymore. His attitude is just unbelievable and most unacceptable."

MICHAEL CURCIJA, South Melbourne's crack international striker, knocked up his 'ton' of games in the NSL at the Bob Jane Stadium against the Parramatta Power recently.

Souths won 4-2 with Michael scoring from the penalty spot his sixth goal of the season.

This helped Michael to celebrate his newly acquired status as now having become an 'N.S.L. Centurion'.

Michael stated: "Reaching 100 games is a milestone that indicates a National League player has succeeded.

"Souths has provided me

with a great platform to show I'm a good striker.

"The results Souths has accomplished over recent years, have been second-to-none," ended Curcija. Last weekend against Carlton Curcija played his 100th match in the NSL for Souths. That's 102 overall.



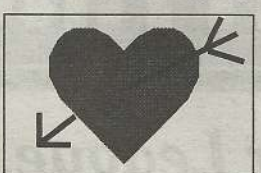
Michael Curcija: Souths' latest 'NSL Centurion'.

SECRET ROMANCES Within the ranks of the NSL fraternity have been breaking out over recent weeks with monotonous regularity.

And it's well after Spring.

Kicking off the 'New Sweet-Hearts Club' is an NSL coach who has 'signed up' a new stunning, black haired dolly with an American background that assists with the same Club's entertainment.

'Lovebirds No 2', involves an international



central defender who for the past few weeks has been very closely 'marking' a stunning 'striker' from his Club's administration office.

'Lovebirds No 3', and far more recently, a towering NSL goalkeeper raced off his line and wrapped both of his gloves around his Club's delicious and very pleasant Public Relations manageress.

In fact, his grip is getting tighter and they could be heading for the 'Grand Finals' as he is about to offer her a 'life term contract'.

Making all these affairs most acceptable, there are no 'off-sides' involved.

All parties are 'free agents' and 'well out of contract'.

ADELAIDE CITY's A.C.E.O. Ned Coten, will relinquish his position next month.

Coten was initially installed by the 'Black and Whites' to the position last June and is now parting on 'good terms'.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC's General manager Frank Martin is also on the 'transfer list' as he resigned last week from the Club.



Frank Martin: Olympic's General manager resigned.

Martin stated frustrations within the Club plus the League being a 'directionless competition'.

ANTHONY SURJAN, the Wollongong Wolves' midfielder, knocked up his 'ton' of matches in the NSL last Sunday in the home match against the Canberra Cosmos at Brandon Park.



Anthony Surjan: Wollongong's latest NSL 'Centurion'.

ATTACKING right Midfielders TRAVIS DODD (Newcastle Breakers) and Robbie Middleby (Auckland Kingz), last weekend each knocked up their 50th match in the NSL against the Perth Glory and the Melbourne Knights respectively.



Velimir Kupresak: Record breaker at United.



Travis Dodd: Newcastle Breakers midfielder's 50th NSL match.

Dodd is formerly from Adelaide City whilst the mobile Middleby originally played with the Wollongong Wolves. Dodd even scored Newcastle's third goal in the Breakers' 3-2 win over the Glory to top off a wonderful night.

VELIMIR KUPRESAK, Sydney United's magnificent captain and central marker, last Sunday against the Parramatta Power broke the long standing record for the most games played the Club.

The sterling big 'Vela' has now played no less than 239 matches for United who he joined almost 11 years ago from Victorian side St Albans.

SOUTH MELBOURNE Last Sunday night for their big derby clash against Carlton, was seeking to break their home crowd record of 14,850 at the Bob Jane Stadium.

Souths ended up with a crowd of 12,864.

The current League champions set the new record back in May of 1998 on Sunday 3rd, in the Major Semi final second leg clash against Carlton, would you believe.

On that day Souths ultimately ran out 1-0 winners to enable them to qualify for the Grand Final where the League's



Ms Gabriella Genovese: Marconi's lovely Secretary of Soccer seen here with Italian World Cup strike-star Toto Schillaci when he toured Sydney with his Japanese club side.

Just recently Marconi winned and dined the entire Auckland Kingz squad, again turning on the style.

Last Thursday night, it was on again.

This time almost 400 children were herded into 'the Palace' to be entertained by Club Marconi.

The children were all given free food and drinks, plus small gifts for Christmas.

Two of Marconi's beautiful administration girls, Gabriella (Soccer) and Stella (Marketing), were there to make sure that it all happened, and happened well.

With support-staff, the dedicated Marconi girls beaverishly worked all week to organise and finally put on the Christmas party night for the kids last Thursday.

Head coach Eddie Krncevic was also in attendance with his entire NSL squad.

train more than three times a week.

If they do, the respective clubs must pay for all extra training sessions, over and above the three sessions.

Marvellous. How can our product improve under these financial stringent Union 'laws'?

Crowds are diving this season across-the-board with monotonous regularity, despite what our Soccer authorities are boasting of them being up every year?

Diving crowds simply translates to diving income, does it not?

In very recent years, there has been no correlation between club Soccer payrolls and gate-takings.

None whatsoever.

There's a big gap. Huge in fact.

Does Grand Canyon ring a bell?

Payrolls, (at all clubs), far outweigh gate-takings which already show very disturbing negative cash balances.

members, with the 'P&L' throwing out a nice \$2.4 million—LOSS.

And still growing daily. Let's exemplify this matter a little.

Club A, 10 years back, would experience a cash shortage, of say 20%, of payrolls.

Today, with rocketing player-contracts and diving crowds, Club A, as a percentage remember, is experiencing a cash-shortage that has now stretched to 35% of payrolls. And rising.

Where does it all end? Not difficult to answer. Not difficult at all.

Where on earth is the economic sanity? 'Good Oil' questions the Players' Union, and of course players themselves.

Remember that 'Golden Goose' and the 'Golden Eggs'?

Well we certainly have heaps of geese, as club administrators, and that, is something that nobody will readily deny.

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...



Angie Postecoglou:
Souths' championship-winning coach.

youngest coach Angie Postecoglou won the first of his back-to-back League Championships.

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS last Friday night created history with their industrious 3-2 whirlwind victory over the Perth Glory at the Breakers' Stadium.

This was the Breakers' fourth consecutive win, a



Todd McManus:
Newcastle's outstanding central marker.

record since the Breakers were formed back in 1991.

MARK BYRNES, skipper of Australia's Under17s and recent Silver Medal winners at the World Championships in New Zealand, has gained a traineeship as the Parramatta Power's Development Co-ordinator.

Mark recently made his debut in the Power's team against Newcastle Breakers



Mark Byrnes: The Power's new Development Co-ordinator

when he came on 12 minutes from the bell to replace central marker Joe Vrkic.

As the Power's Development Co-ordinator, Byrnes will liaise with

schools and junior clubs in the Parramatta area, setting up coaching clinics and various development programmes.

Meanwhile in other news from the Power, Head coach David Mitchell has drafted in two 17-year-old outstanding prospects from interstate who have in recent weeks been training with the Parramatta Power squad.

Adrian Caceras from Perth-Italia, impressed Mitchell when the Power played in Perth against a Western Australian State select side during the pre-season. Caceras captured Mitchell's eye when the teenager even managed to score a 'double' against the Power.

The second 17-year-old is Ian Fyfe from the South Australian Soccer Academy. Ian was also a member of the successful Australian Under 17s squad in the World Championships in New Zealand.

By Christmas, Mitchell will make his final decision as to whether the two teenagers will be extended contracts to sign for the Power.

The Power's next home match is against Sydney Olympic next Tuesday night (December 28th), starting at 7.30pm.

ZORAN MATIC, the Adelaide City coach was a somewhat calm man after his team defeated the Northern Spirit 0-3 in Sydney last Friday night.

We wonder why. Till last Friday night, the 'Black and Whites' had lost eight games on the trot.

In fact some smart alecs were suggesting buying all the Adelaide City players cigarette lighters for Christmas because they had lost all their 'matches'.

For the past three weeks, almost with monotonous regularity, certain sections of the Adelaide media have bombarded Matic with negative publicity, constantly speculating his pending sacking.

However after last Friday night's match, a high ranking



Zoran Matic: Never in danger of been sacking.



By John Economos

Adelaide City official, stated to 'Good Oil': "No matter what City's results are, Zoran Matic will never be sacked."

"Zoran Matic is Adelaide City," the gun-official stressed to this column.

NORTHERN SPIRIT'S ground-announcer last Friday night at North Sydney Oval, got his 'footballs' in a knot.

Five minutes before halftime, player-coach Graham Arnold was forced to replace his injured striker Abbas Saad with the mobile striker Tony Perinich.

But the keen as mustard and alert and very quick announcer, instead of calling over the P.A. system: "For the Northern Spirit there's a team change.....",

He hastily went over the air, calling: "For the Northern Storm.....!!!"

If he's got to 'bowl a wrong-un', why didn't he go all the way and include the word.... 'Melbourne'.

AUSTRALIA will participate in a four-nation-tournament in Chile next February with almost all of our Euro-based players making themselves available for the South American crusade.

All of course, but 'That One'.

The same 'One' as always.



Mark Schwarzer: A comeback for Australia soon.

Australia will clash with Chile, Slovakia and Bulgaria. Also in February, Frank Farina's Australia will play Wales, and back up in March to face the Czech Republic.

All the above games will be 'away'.

Farina is contemplating drafting former Marconi giant goalkeeper, Mark Schwarzer, currently performing heroics with England Premier League side Middlesbrough for these games.

This may also be an

avenue Farina is pursuing in a wise bid to gently avoid a possible head-on confrontation in asking Manchester United's boss Sir Alex Ferguson for the release of Mark Bosnich.

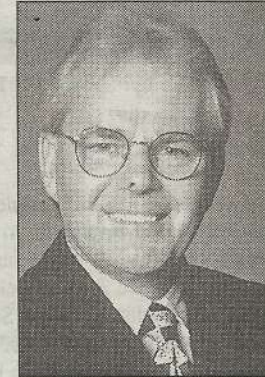
Either way, 'Good Oil' strongly believes Big Schwarzer has been messed around for far too long.

Since saving Australia back in 1993 against Canada at the Sydney Football Stadium, Schwarzer has been almost totally ignored. Make no mistake, the big blond 'glove-man' is an ace 'keeper of international quality.

There are many nations on our planet that would give their 'right glove' to have Australia's Mark Schwarzer standing between their own 'stumps'.

SBS-TV, the Super Soccer Channel, has done it again. Thank God.

Late last week, despite the Network's enormous budget restraints, the 'Soccer-heavies' in the Sports Department were able to successfully convince the SBS hierarchy to bring in a Live coverage of all of South Melbourne's games



Les Murray: Head of Sport at SBS.

in the FIFA Club World Championship from Brazil to be staged on 5-14 January.

As well, SBS will bring in the Live telecast of the Final direct from the world famous mega ground, Rio's Maracana Stadium.

SBS Television's Head Of Sport, Les Murray, stated: "It's the first time an Australian team is involved in a World Championship at men's senior level since the 1974 World Cup finals in West Germany."

"SBS is thrilled to be able to bring the event to Australian audiences," Murray proudly ended.

GLAMOUR NSW SUPER LEAGUE side, the Leichhardt Tigers, last Saturday night staged their Annual Pre-Season Launch in a most spectacular and colourful fashion.

The large roll-up included special guests such as NSW President Peter Gray, former World Cup captain John Warren, the national manager

of the Tigers' major sponsor, 'Barilla Australia' Mr Frank Tumino, plus members of the Soccer media.

The Tigers' roared the night away with a huge entertainment bill. Singing duet 'Tenderheart' opened up the 'innings' followed by an opera singer, then a dazzling, pulsating, sexy and colourful Brazilian dance troupe 'Atomico Tropicale', plus Davin Griffiths-Jones & Dynasty.

If they all weren't enough, out came ace comedian Ray



Steve Karavatakis:
Leichhardt Tigers' new senior skipper.

Seagher 'in extra-time', who with a lengthy staccato of intelligent, but simple jokes, left the audience totally shattered with endless laughter.

All the Tigers' playing squads, including the Cadets, Youth League, Seniors, Under 21s and 18s attended the function.

The extremely delicious and monstrous variety of Italian cuisine served to the guests, (as always), again was astonishingly exquisite.

The Tigers' new Head coach Les De Celis was introduced who in turn individually introduced all his new and young signings, as well as unveiling the Tigers new senior captain, ace-goalscorer Steve Karavatakis.

DAVID BARRETT, Parramatta Power's powerful right defender, despite having gone without sleep for 48 hours prior to his team's away match against Sydney United, still laced up last Sunday night.

Was the schoolteacher awake worrying about the game? Not really. It was all about 'team-effort', as David was closely 'marking' his wife Nerida in hospital, going through the process required to deliver the couple's first baby. A boy, Daniel that is. And he's a left-footer, something the Power squad urgently is in need of.

'GOOD OIL' would very much like to wish all its readers a good Christmas, but far more importantly, an even Healthier and Happier New Year.

Drive carefully over the

holiday period. A reminder to all our readers of 'Good Oil'.

Do not forget that as from this Friday, the Roads and Traffic Authority doubles all demerit points for speeding, right through to January 3rd 2000.

See you all in the new millennium, (or should that read next year?).



Santa Claus: 'Man Of The Match This Coming Saturday'



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Applicants must hold at least a Level 2 (old course) or a Senior Coaching Licence with an ACC Level 2 accreditation and also be prepared to undertake a State Coaching Licence.

Written applications for the position close **WED 22 DEC 1999** and would include full details of coaching and playing experience.

Address all correspondence to:

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AUSTRALIAN SOCCER

★★ *Special Feature* ★★

THE NEW MILLENNIUM BOOM OR BUST?

Australian soccer has undergone many changes in the last 40-odd years.

Melbourne editor Bert van Bedaf speculates on what's in store for the code in the new millennium.

Post-second world war migrationary passions stoked the fires of the round ball code and catapulted Australia on to the international stage with a sport foreign to the early Aussie pioneers.

The passions simmered in Australia's ethnic enclaves until the national team, the Socceroos, reached the World Cup finals in Germany in 1974. It was a triumph that momentarily gripped national pride and infected soccer enthusiasm beyond the Greek, Italian or Scottish households. When the National Soccer League made its entrance in 1977, the sport was on its way.

These two events, World Cup participation and the formation of the NSL, are still the vital posts holding up the goal of Australia's soccer push towards a bright future.

There are other components offering important prospects. The Joeys (U17s) made their World Cup final in New Zealand last November and they will form the talent bank for the new millennium. The Matildas, who have participated in two World Cups, and the Olyroos, are Olympic medal hopes in Sydney 2000.

The Socceroos, comprising a galaxy of overseas players, are preparing themselves for World Cup qualification in Japan and South Korea in 2002.

They are the Millennium Mariners,

charting Australia's soccer fortunes through international waters, with a nation watching how well they will fare. Success will affirm soccer's promising status in this country.

Failure will set future progress back a fair bit.

Since the Matildas and Olyroos are hosts, their Sydney 2000 participation is guaranteed.

Undoubtedly, Olympic medals will boost soccer's profile, but a second World Cup qualification for the Socceroos in 2002 will drive the world code to the forefront of Australian sporting consciousness and form a platform for bigger crowds, bigger sponsorship and media coverage.

It will help spearhead a major push for the National Soccer League to raise its profile and become the force AFL chief Wayne Jackson once described as "the code that's winning the minds and bodies of our young".

Australia is in Oceania Group One with Tonga, Fiji, American Samoa and Samoa. Australia's main rival, New Zealand, is in Group Two with Tahiti, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands.

The finals between likely group winners Australia and New Zealand are the important local matches. The winner will represent Oceania in the World Cup qualification play-offs, set by FIFA to be held



The 1974 Australian side: A triumph of national pride.

between November 11-25 in 2001, against the fifth-placed team from South America.

Meanwhile, the national league will undergo yet another revamp to drive its marketability into the new millennium.

After the "Private & Confidential" release of its Benchmark paper, Soccer Australia wants to reduce the league from 16 to 12 franchised clubs, with the likelihood of the discarded clubs together with several ambitious State premier league clubs forming a second national division.

The intricacies and complexities of the new measures Soccer Australia wants to implement may lead to legal action by the NSL clubs affected by such criteria as ethnicity, regionality, poor finance or low attendance.

Some of the core contrasts involve Soccer Australia's desire to embrace so-called "mainstream" clubs like Perth Glory in favor of "traditional" ethnic-based clubs like Sydney United or Melbourne Knights to give soccer (and therefore sponsors) a wider audience.

So far, the clubs have reacted angrily and decided collectively to recommend to Soccer Australia that it defers the proposed Benchmark changes by a year.

Reform is a crucial aspect of the game and ideally the changes should not be delayed. The outcome of current discussions or possible legal action between now and the March deadline will largely shape the future of Australian soccer in the new millennium. It will help determine its future.

Will it be boom or bust?

"...the code that's winning the minds and bodies of our young."

A KNIGHT FOR TV

By Bert van Bedaf

In Sunshine, at the Melbourne Knights social club last Friday night a few hundred supporters are gathered around the television, watching their team taking on the Football Kingz in Auckland.

There's John and Rob, Ivan, big Tony, Steve and Murtala Abbas, the Knights latest popular stopper. The Nigerian was denied his Kiwi trip at Melbourne Airport, because he didn't have a visa to enter New Zealand.

"I was at the airport with the team. Then they realised I needed a visa."

"The Australian officials called New Zealand authorities at the airport, but they were told I needed a visa. They tried to get it but it was too late."

"It's very painful to be here and not playing," Abbas bemoaned his misfortune.

It was a major blow to the Knights backline. Last week Abbas had just about put Graham Arnold out

of business and the Northern Spirit captain had complimented the lanky Nigerian on his marking skills. "He walked up to me after the game and we talked about it," said Abbas, who had no idea who Arnold was in the scheme of Australian and overseas soccer.

But now Abbas is here, eating fish and chips and salad, watching the Knights take a 35th minute lead with a right-foot blinder by Ivan Kelic. "A Christmas bonus for Kelic. Isn't that guy something," the chorus went.

Abbas cheers the loudest.

The first penalty arrived with a minute left in the first half. Dino Mennillo was brought down in the box and Kingz captain Harry Ngata, who'd played with the Bulleen Kings in the Victorian Premier League, slotted home the spot-kick.

Someone thumped the table. Was it Abbas? Cheers again. Mennillo is sent off in first half injury

time. The Kingz are a player short, setting up an exciting second half.

The Knights again took the lead in the 56th minute. Kelic again. "A huge bonus for Christmas. Yes!"

But then the game went mad. Dragi Nasteviski body-checked former Carlton player Marcus Stergiopoulos and referee Gerry Connolly raised his second red card for the night. Ten against 10.

A minute later, expletives fly through the air. More tables are thumped.

It doesn't disturb the chess players nor the card players a few tables down the back.

Martin John collects player-coach Wynton Rufer in the box. He's lucky not to be sent off as well. Ngata converts his second penalty. The Kingz draw level again.

The social club mood drops considerably. But

Brandon Vassallo brings the house down with a super volley that puts the Knights in the lead for the third time. Knights coach Vlado Vanis goes berserk on the sideline as the tension mounts.

But the Knights defence is feeling the pressure. For the last 10 minutes, some run around like chooks without heads.

It's excruciating to watch how the ball is half-cleared and promptly returns to the goal-mouth. With four minutes left, Jonathan Perry is left unmarked only metres in front of goal and he heads the Kingz to a 3-3 draw.

The Knights fans are fairly peeved off to say the least. Knights president Tony Karlusic, whose heart missed a beat several times, sums up the general feeling in the room.

"We had the lead three times and three times we gave it away. It's very disappointing. It should have been a win for us," Karlusic said.

And Abbas? He'd almost finished his big fish, but along the way he appeared to have lost his appetite. "We should have won," he said.



REFORMS ANGER CLUBS

By Bert van Bedaf

Soccer Australia will go ahead with its reforms, despite an earlier bid by the national soccer league clubs to defer the formation of a 12-club league and an NSL second division by 12 months.

"We would have been in a situation, where we would have had a lame duck competition for the season 2000/2001," Soccer Australia chairman Basil Scarcella defended the decision.

In a flurry of meetings last weekend, SA outlined its plans to the clubs. The clubs then met privately to discuss the reforms. They reported back to Soccer Australia, with their recommendation to defer. But late last Sunday, the Soccer Australia board decided to stick to its original timetable and introduce major changes to the league immediately after the Olympics.

"The feedback the Board received from stakeholders (state federations) was overwhelmingly in favour of reformation. Any delays in implementing the reforms, including a second division, would be detrimental to the game," Scarcella said.

"Soccer is set to create a big impetus at the Sydney 2000 Games, and the national league will receive a natural springboard of that continuing impetus by re-launching itself directly after the Games," he said.

There will be a revamped NSL of 12 teams and a newly constituted second division of 10 teams, which will kick off in October 2000, Scarcella said.

The clubs and the NSL executive, who voted 14-1 in favor of deferment (with one abstention), are now directly at loggerheads with the Soccer Australia board and the State federation, who voted heavily in favour of immediate reforms.

The NSL clubs want to defer the reforms for 12 months,

for the SA executive to appoint people to monitor the entry criteria as outlined in its Benchmarks 2000/2001 paper and for close consultation with SA when finalising the criteria.

The clubs also questioned the financial viability of a 10-club national league second division and recommended SA should undertake a feasibility study before going ahead with it.

"Every club was in favour of putting it (reform) off for 12 months.

There's not enough time. The National Rugby League gave clubs two years to sort themselves out. We get a few months. That's not entirely fair. Give us 12 months and then it's up to the clubs to meet the criteria," said Tony Karlusic, president of the Melbourne Knights, one of the clubs tipped to be cut from the top NSL league.

Karlusic said clubs to be axed from the league would be prepared to take legal action.

"I'd say, 100 per cent of the clubs would go to the courts. Every club would go to the courts, I can guarantee you that," he said.

"The clubs asked for a year's grace to consult and discuss the reforms, but Soccer Australia decided to go ahead with the 12 clubs and a second division of 10 clubs. It's a bold move and hopefully they got it right for everybody's sake," South Melbourne president George Vasilopoulos said.

"Vasilopoulos was confident his club would meet the criteria. 'If South Melbourne can't meet the criteria, SA can start looking for consortiums and 12 other teams,' he said.

South Melbourne, back-to-back-champion, has one of the best soccer grounds in Melbourne at Albert Park Lake and at its last match against Carlton attracted a crowd of almost 13,000.

The Gippsland Falcons, another club under threat of being axed, reacted calmly to the rising storm. "We're confident we can meet any sensible criteria," club president

Peter Quirk said.

Carlton, which has two more years to go on its five-year licence, is confident it will be part of the league next year. It favored the new criteria, although it was sure no club was able to meet them 100 per cent.

It also favoured for the Falcons and the Knights to be retained in the league, if the clubs could put up a case.

"With the new criteria we're heading in the right direction, but not any one club can meet all of the criteria," Carlton general manager Lou Sticca said.

Sticca also believed, Soccer Australia would allow some

flexibility in the culling process.

"I have a feeling if Soccer Australia gets 14 good applications, they might accept that. If, for example, Gippsland or the Melbourne Knights can put up a good case, they should be given the chance to participate," he said.

Sticca cautioned against too many and continual changes. "Soccer needs to stabilise and time to create its own history. To make a change every year is to the detriment of the game. What we need is stability and time to bed this (reform) down," he said.

CRITERIA

In a memo, stamped "Private & Confidential" and entitled, "Benchmarks 2000/2001", Soccer Australia has tabled a hefty list of criteria clubs will need to meet to be part of a 12-team National Soccer League after the Olympics.

Weightings apply to the criteria, relating to finances (60 per cent), marketing (30 per cent) and the remainder to something called "compliance", involving geographic location and staff appointments.

The Benchmarks are:

- A 12 team league, with clubs playing each other three times.
- Clubs currently in the NSL are invited to re-apply.
- Expressions of interest will be invited from new applicants, either other clubs or "entities not currently associated with the NSL and mergers of existing clubs".
- Closing date for applications is 31 March, 2000. The composition of the new league will be announced "no later than June 12, 2000".

SA will ensure that the seven State/Territory Soccer Federations and New Zealand are represented in the 2000/2001 competition.

There will be a team each from the ACT, Northern NSW, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia


and New Zealand, leaving on the face of it six clubs between NSW and Victoria. But SA also stated, "In the case of NSW and Victorian Federations, the combined maximum number of clubs from those Federations should not exceed eight."

Application incurs a \$10,000 fee. A licence fee of \$250,000 will also act as a guarantee. As part of the financial criteria, existing clubs will need to demonstrate "they have the capacity to sustain losses and remain solvent". New applicants will also need a "minimum working capital of no less than \$3 million".

Clubs also need to demonstrate minimum revenue of \$1.5 million in the first year, including \$500,000 hometakings, \$750,000 sponsorship and \$150,000 shirt sponsorship. The total minimum figure rises to \$3 million by the fourth and fifth year.


Clubs also need to provide a bank guarantee in favour of Soccer Australia and spend between 15 and 20 per cent of total revenue on marketing and promotion.

They must employ a full time general manager, administrative support staff, coach and development officer, as well as a part-time financial controller, team manager, visiting team liaison, doping control liaison and a match day producer. In addition, clubs will also need a full time marketing manager and a full time media manager.




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STRIKERS NOT PANICKING YET

By Glenn Davis

Brisbane Strikers coach John Kosmina is not hitting the panic button over recent losses but concedes some of his players may already be feeling the effects of a lengthy playing stint.

Gold Coast players Peter Grierson, Peter Dwyer, Shane Smeltz and Brisbane teammates Brad Ditton, David Pilic and Greg Di Losa joined the club after completing a demanding season in the State's XXXX League.

The Strikers' led the competition for the first nine rounds when the XXXX league players were still relatively fresh before suffering successive losses to Newcastle Breakers and Gippsland Falcons.

Strikers chief executive Ray Evans agrees some of the Strikers looked leg weary against Gippsland but is confident the club will bounce back when Australian Under 17's Wayne Srhoj and Jade North

return along with fellow midfielder Chay Hews. Hews has been playing in Japan and his return is imminent.

Srhoj and North returned to Brisbane on the weekend following their stints with the Australian Institute of Sport but Kosmina refused to rush them into the side against Sydney Olympic and ordered a two week

Christmas holiday for the pair.

Evans said neither were expected to make their return for the Strikers until mid-January at the earliest.

"It was Kossie's idea as he wanted them back fresh after all their travelling overseas and playing in New Zealand with the Under 17's," Evans said.

Kosmina believes the Strikers' XXXX league players played out of their skins in the first nine rounds and it was only natural they would soon become jaded.

"It's a big ask for these guys to step up to the NSL after playing 27 games in the local competition," Kosmina said.

"The guys played out of

their skins for the first nine weeks which put us on top of the ladder.

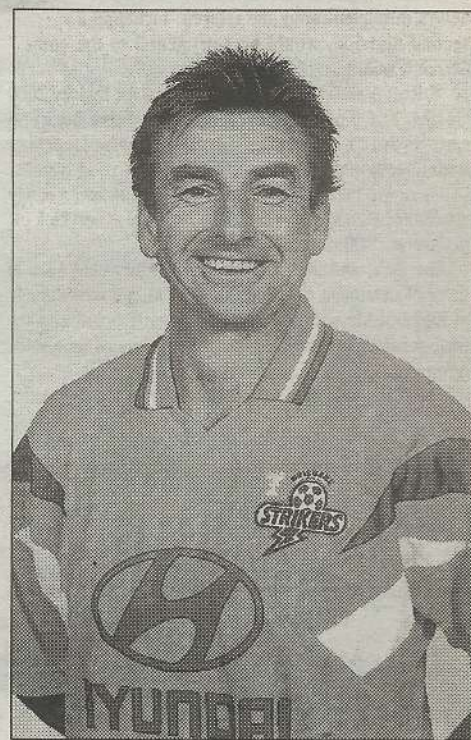
"To keep that going was always going to be difficult, but I'm confident we can bounce back."



Peter Grierson: Demanding season.



Peter Dwyer: A long haul.



John Kosmina: Confident of bouncing back.

VIS COACH VISITS CHINA

By Roy Hay

Erne Merrick, the Head Coach of the Victorian Institute of Sport, has just returned from a two-week coaching and fact-finding tour of Jiangsu Province in China, with which the State of Victoria has a sister relationship.

Merrick was invited by the Nanjing Institute of Sport and accompanied the VIS diving squad which was training in China at the same time.

While there he worked with Chinese coaches at all levels from juniors to First Division seniors and commented on their intense physical preparation of carefully selected players drawn from all over China.

Talent identification is careful and thorough and the sport is booming. The technical and physical side of the players' preparation is strong. Youth devel-



Ernie Merrick: Fact finding in China.

opment is a priority. It is funded by the state, though there is private sponsorship at the elite level.

The Jiangsu system is replicated in the other provinces in China and reflects the tremendous efforts being made to take this massive country to the top in men's soccer, a level it has already reached in the women's game.

China was only beaten on penalties by the United States in final of the last Women's World Cup.

Merrick noted that the key areas where the Chinese players need to work further on their game are those of individual initiative and decision making, aspects which are stressed in the VIS program which is acknowledged as one of the best in the country. It has produced several of the Joeys who lost to Brazil in the World Under-17 tournament in New Zealand last month.

CAN YOU STUMP THE ABSW EDITOR?

SEE PAGE 21 FOR DETAILS



CANBERRA COSMOS



WILL THEY SURVIVE?

By Graham Cooke

Rumours the Canberra Cosmos will be cut from the National Soccer League at the end of the current season have abounded in the National Capital in the last couple of weeks.

Most of the speculation has been fired up by the contents of Soccer Australia's worst-kept secret, the so-called blueprint for the competition in the next century, Soccer 21.

While the document officially remained under wraps last week, much of its contents have found their way into the media - enough to convince some news sources in Canberra that the Cosmos have little hope of remaining in the competition. One local television station even went so far as to say the Cosmos were "facing the axe".

None of which pleased the club's chairman, Ian Knop, who has never been backward in criticising some sections of the media. Last week he called a press conference to "defuse" the issue which he admitted has been

causing concern among Cosmos supporters.

"I can't at this stage provide definitive statements, but our initial response to [Soccer 21] is that the Cosmos are favourably placed," he said.

"We do well, in some cases better, than a lot of the bigger clubs in certain aspects of the criteria."

Knop said he was quietly confident about the club's future "and I would like to assure the public it is not misplaced confidence".

It may be that Knop is putting his faith in another leaked clause of the document, which stipulates any restructured national competition must include a team from the ACT. If so, he is showing remarkable faith in Soccer Australia given its track record in similar situations in the past.

There have been mountains of criteria, reports, inquiries and blueprints on the National Soccer League since it began in 1977. Most have been redundant before the ink dried.

Throughout much of the period Canberra was exiled from the NSL, between 1987 and 1995,

there was a provision that a team from the city 'should' be in the competition.

The reason it was not implemented, we were told, was that no team could be found that fulfilled minimum requirements. Until such time Canberra's place would be filled "on a temporary basis" by a club from elsewhere.

So we are back to square one. The Cosmos will stand or fall by whatever criteria is demanded of them - and if they fail, it is highly unlikely any other soccer grouping in the ACT could do better.

In some areas Canberra is performing relatively well. Its sponsorship portfolio is impressive, the day-to-day administration is conducted efficiently, and if the team has not set the league alight on the field, there has been a definite improvement on past seasons.

However, in crucial areas such as the number of its paid back-room staff, and the income it draws from home attendances, it is lagging.

Some comfort can be drawn from the fact it is not alone in this regard.



Ian Knop: Never been backward.

But the situation goes far beyond the fate of the Cosmos. Once again Soccer Australia cannot resist tinkering with the national competition, once again uncertainties have been created,

the finger pointed at clubs rightly or wrongly suspected of being out of favour.

None of this helps the NSL or soccer in this country. I would go further and say the game's

progress has been retarded by successive generations of administrators who cannot leave well alone.

We have had competitions consisting of 12 clubs, we have had competitions of 24, in two divisions, we have had 18, 17, 16 and 14.

We have had penalty shoot-outs in drawn games, top four play-offs, top five and top six; for one incredible season in the 24-team era we had a system of cross-over games that not even the clubs themselves fully understood.

And above all we have had the agony of constant changes of membership, some of it forced by circumstances admittedly, but in most cases just part of the endless casting about for the Holy Grail.

What this league desperately needs is stability: two, three, four seasons when there are no changes at all, so that the clubs, and the competition generally can build a profile.

But if the past is any guide to the future, this is the last thing it will get.

ACT PREMIER LEAGUE

Court Battle Looms

By Graham Cooke

O'Connor Knights may go to court after Soccer Canberra denied the ACT Second Division champions promotion to the Novell Premier League next season, instead elevating the runners-up, Tuggeranong United.

The Knights, along with three existing Premier League clubs, Queanbeyan City, Canberra Olympic and Burns Club, failed to meet the criteria laid down by the senior league management committee for taking part in the 10-team competition.

City were relegated to the second division, but Olympic and Burns get 12-month stays of execution.

It was further revealed that Tuggeranong also failed to get over the line, but were given a season in the top flight in which to prove themselves.

The seven accepted unconditionally are Belconnen United, Canberra Deakin, Weston Creek Royals, Gungahlin Juventus, Capital City Suns, Monaro and

the University of Canberra.

Knights won the second division by nine points from Tuggeranong, but were well beaten by their rival in the grand final. However, under the previous system the team that topped the points table was the one considered for promotion.



Soccer Canberra chief executive Robert Bennett said the clubs themselves voted for a change in the rules. "They felt there should be more criteria than simply winning Premier League Two," he said.

He was backed by Soccer Canberra

president Steve Doszpot who said there had been general agreement the growth and development of soccer in the region depended on many more factors than just winning matches.

"For our sport to grow our clubs must perform well across a whole range of areas - the new criteria reflects this," he said.

Knights officials may well have seen this decision coming, and turned their recent presentation night into a rally in favour of their promotion, securing an endorsement from the Minister for Sport, Bill Stefaniak.

Club patron and prominent lawyer Bernard Collaery sprang to the Knights' support, calling for an inquiry into the formula used to assess clubs' suitability. "I am confident any independent inquiry will reveal a weighting against the Knights," he said.

"The bureaucrats have won the day...perhaps the establishment feels threatened by the enthusiasm and energy of the newly emerging clubs."

CASTRO COMEBACK

Alex Castro, the Canberra Cosmos' one long-term injury problem, has had the plaster removed from the leg he broke against Brisbane Strikers on October 15. The talented midfielder believes he is on course for a comeback early in the New Year.



STATE COACHES

Applications are invited for the positions of Year 2000 NSW Soccer Federation Male State Team Coach for the U/14, U/15 and U/16 age group.

The Federation State Teams are an essential part of the Elite Development Program and give our Elite Players the opportunity to advance to the NSWIS, AIS and possible National Representation.

For the Year 2000 the U/14 team will compete in the Friendship Games Tournament to be held in Newcastle the first week of the July school holidays.

The U/15 and U/16 teams will compete in the National Talent Identification Championships to be held at Valentine Sports Park during the second week of the July school holidays.

Coaches applying for this position must hold a current Level 2 (old course) or a Senior Coaching Licence and also be prepared to complete a State Coaching Licence.

Written applications for this position close **WED 22 DEC 1999** and should include full details of coaching and playing experience.

Address all correspondence to:

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FOUR WEEKS TO GLORY

Dear Sir,

If Soccer Australia's boss Basil Scarcella wants to leave nothing to chance to qualify for the next World Cup, why not play the Oceania group qualifiers just prior to the final two games against the fifth placed South American team.

Getting a couple of friendly warm-up games for our overseas players in late October or early November during Europe's domestic football season could prove to be difficult in getting them released.

At the very least the two games against the Kiwis (NZ) should be moved to just prior to the South American games in November.

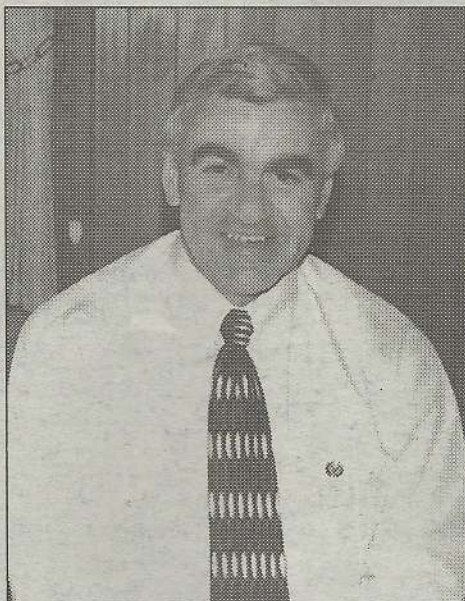
Provided we don't use the overseas player's more than three times earlier in the year 2001, then the European and other overseas clubs have no choice but to release our players for those four very important World Cup Qualifying games.

The fact that the European clubs could be without our players for over a month is not our fault or our problem. If anything we may be able to get their confederations support for a direct path to a World Cup finals spot from Oceania in the future.

I'm sure the Kiwis would not mind playing Australia the two weekend's just prior to those last two games, as they would be in much the same boat as we are, if they got through.

Nothing beats a proper preparation with continuity together over a four week period.

As for the early Oceania group games against the smaller Pacific Island nations, they can be scheduled anytime during the year, as our locally based players are more than good enough to defeat them, regardless of whether all the games are played here, or on a home and away basis.



Basil Scarcella: Decisions to be made.

So lets give our National side the best preparation possible, and to hell with European club complaints about releasing our players for four games-straight against the New Zealanders and the fifth placed Latin opponent from South America.

**Dominic Scullino,
Nerang, Qld.**

You know I actually think this makes alot of sense. I would be in favour of this proposal. I can't wait to hear what the European clubs have to say though...if this happens. I can't wait. - Ed

ONE DIRECTION ONLY PLEASE!

Dear Sir,

Most of us complain bitterly that the Australian media ignores our code of soccer, even if successful at international level.

Instead of complaining we should be looking at the people in charge of Soccer Australia, the State soccer bodies, the local soccer associations and the individual club promotion officials.

Obviously we are not united and efficient enough to lobby the Australian community to come out in numbers to support our game and give us national recognition.

One hears and reads of ever more occurring ethnic clashes and or differences, pointing to various backgrounds and origins of players.

We also hear about top administrators completely ignoring local soccer events like junior finals or gala days, of jealous commissioners, of successful local coaches overlooked until recently at least and other minor quarrels among soccer hierarchies.

It is time we look critically at ourselves, grit our teeth together, and work harder in marketing and promotion. All of us must pull in one direction only.

Only then can we achieve our ultimate aim for soccer to become a major sport in Australia. It probably hurts to identify some truth however, objectively my reasoning might touch some real causes of soccer's poor image in this country.

Personally I will stay positive, always trying to foster soccer to improve it's local and national development, no matter how often negatives are thrown at the code. In comparison with soccer any other sport sinks into oblivion despite the noise of Australian sports journalists about their preferred codes.

**Otto Bader,
Warilla, NSW.**

For so many years we've ALL been talking about pulling in the same direction. It's just that sometimes we're not quite sure what is actually being pulled! - Ed

Send letters to Australian and British Soccer Weekly

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CUT AUCKLAND

Dear Sir,

I refer to recent speculation in the Media and I'm concerned in particular by the article which named four potential candidates for "the chop" - all of them Australian clubs.

Some months ago I wrote of my concern at the entry to the national League of Auckland Kingz and my fears that this would enable New Zealand to form a squad which in turn would "raise their game" closer to our Aussie standard - from recent results this is now happening.

At the risk of repeating myself - New Zealand are our main rivals for World Cup qualification.

To Soccer Australia & NSL officials I suggest they

wake up to this very real threat & if there is to be any "culling" of clubs - then Auckland would be the first club to go.

**Roy Lowe,
Avid Fan**

As much as I like the idea of the Auckland Kingz as a team, you do have to question the fact that they are in an Australian competition and we are their main rivals for World Cup qualification. Although a good portion of the Kingz squad are actually Australian. At least if we fail at the Kivi hurdle come World Cup qualification time, we'll know where to place the blame. It remains to be seen... - Ed

HOOKED ON US

Dear Sir,

I have just started reading your fantastic weekly paper. This year marks my first as an attending soccer supporter (I follow South Melbourne) and I am now hooked.

I really appreciate being able to educate myself about the game, the players, how the game is run etc... Things I've always taken for granted with Australian Rules as I've grown up in a household where the whole family went every week.

Now I'm starting from scratch and really enjoying

it. The South Melbourne supporters are fanatical and the passion is great. I also appreciate the opportunity to catch up with news about the Chelsea FC. Just thought I'd say thanks - your efforts each week are much appreciated.

**Mary Tovey
VIC**

I'm glad you've joined the ABSW Readers Team. Keep supporting. This is the greatest game on Earth. Keep in touch. - Ed

Dear Sir,

Recently in the mainstream media there has been a lot of nonsensical comments about the poor form of Northern Spirit this season.

I would like to suggest a quick and painless solution to the problem. Coach Graham Arnold and Remo Nogarotto should be locked in separate rooms with only a TV set and VCR that will constantly show re-runs of Spirit's most "unwatchable" matches played this season. As there is only a limit to the

amount of mental torture a human being can tolerate they will quickly beg for money.

As well after such a harrowing experience both will resign on the spot out of fear or shock or both.

This is not some sought of joke but a serious suggestion. With the almost weekly departure of the few good and even not so good local players to overseas clubs the standard of the NSL has reached rock bottom.

It could well be that the NSL could provide an inexpensive solution to the problem of violent crime in Australia. Being forced to watch re-runs of unwatchable NSL matches (not just Spirit) should be a wonderful deterrent to troublemakers and would-be criminals.

Perhaps this will be Remo Nogarotto's secret policy to combat case if or when he stands for parliament.

**R. Melor,
Bondi, NSW.**

I'm sure the Spirit will find this letter very amusing. I look forward to their reply. - Ed



Graham Arnold: Unwatchable

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LAY OFF OUR MELBOURNE CLUBS

Dear Sir,

Soccer Australia may one day get it right and give us soccer support-ers what we want. In the meantime lay off the three Melbourne teams.

Soccer Australia have chopped and changed the National League since 1977, and the only thing they have succeeded in doing is creating uncertainty and insecurity to our clubs. I agree with the article in the Sun-Herald from the club managers that it's getting harder to get long-term sponsors. Sponsors won't get involved with clubs that have such a topsy-turvy future that Soccer Australia has created with its policies.

I am a South Melbourne soccer supporter and life member since the start of the National League. During that time I have seen so many stupidities forced on the teams such as when they forced South Melbourne to become the 'Gunners'. We lost half our supporters through that policy.

Then they introduced the Southern Region and the Northern Region with 14 teams in each. Then they scrapped that and went to 18 teams, then 16 then 14. I'm still here, but I've yet to see new supporters due to these changes or any vast improvements. Soccer Australia, stop screwing the League and try helping the clubs you have on a more personal level.

A tip to some of the clubs, if they actually read this article, from a long-term soccer supporter, the two bright things that have appeared in the last couple of



Lou Sticca: Poor parking decision.

years have been Perth Glory and Northern Spirit and that is because they have the chemistry right.

That is, they have captured a regional base, came up with a catchy name for that region and a team for the people to identify with. If clubs like Carlton and

Melbourne Knights can get the chemistry right they also have a good chance of becoming well-supported clubs too.

Maybe with Melbourne Knights, if they can capture the western district of Melbourne and change their name to Western Knights (I think that's catchy) they certainly have the colours and that is part of the chemistry.

As for Carlton, they need three major changes - a name change, a bit of managerial change and a ground change. Let's face it, Carlton is a silly Aussie Rules club name that doesn't capture the whole region, maybe a name like Southern Cross or Eureka Soccer Club, these names share the same colours as Carlton and are very Australian.

As far as managerial changes are concerned there have been a few stuff ups out of the field at Carlton and someone has to take the blame. What I mean is that history tells us that Olympic Park is a non-event when it comes to drawing a decent crowd. Lou Sticca was there with Brunswick Juventus, he was there with Melbourne Knights, he knew when South Melbourne used it as a temporary home and all these clubs failed to draw good crowds.

The reason is we soccer supporters hate the place - no bloody parking and traffic jams even on a quiet night. Olympic Park officials were never interested to

offer soccer supporters a good service. But I guess Lou Sticca forgot all that when he was advising Carlton on a 10 year contract at Olympic Park as a home base. These are just my ideas and my advice but really this is what Soccer Australia should be helping the clubs with.

While I'm in a nasty mood, a bit of advice to my own club's management. We South Melbourne supporters love driving to our soccer games. We need parking, parking and more bloody parking facilities.

You took us away from Middle Park which had 10 times more parking there for life-members and normal supporters.

You've settled for a smaller ground, no parking and the gayest of all grandstand roofs where you get wetter under it than standing out in the rain. Very modern roofline, looks nice, doesn't work, (ripped-off bad). Thanks Jeff Kennett and South Melbourne bosses, that was a fair swap... NOT!!! My sentiments are shared by hundreds and hundreds of soccer supporters.

Con Tripodis
Black Rock, VIC

Con, I'm scared to answer you because you will probably get stuck into me! So I am going to tell you that you are right! Yes, you are right...no word of a lie. But to add one thing 'Eureka Soccer Club'? Gges, I don't know about that. - Ed

CLUB MAN SAYS GOODBYE

Carlton Soccer Club announced last week that young defender David Della Rocca has transferred to ambitious Premier League Club Melbourne Raiders.

The Melbourne Raiders are coached by Chris Taylor who is assembling a competitive team for this year's title challenge.

Carlton Soccer Club General Manager Lou Sticca praised David Della Rocca for his commitment and efforts with the Club;

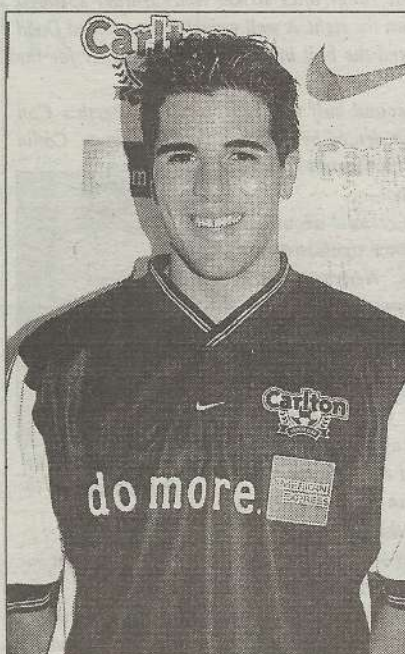
"David has been with the Carlton Soccer Club since inception, and has been a tremendous Club man, always being there when needed. While it

is sad to see David go, I am sure that with a season of senior soccer under his belt, he will be back in the NSL ranks next season. He will relish the opportunity to play 90 minutes of senior soccer every week. On behalf of the Club, I sincerely wish David all the best with his soccer career, and he is always welcome at the Carlton Soccer Club."

Della Rocca is 21 years of age, and has played 33 NSL games for Carlton.

□□□□

Young Defender Serdar Pir, who has played 6 senior games for Carlton, has been transferred to Premier League Club Port Melbourne. Pir has been with the Club since inception, yet has struggled to find a place in the senior team. A talented player, Pir's development will benefit greatly from regular senior competition.



David Della Rocca: Club man gone.



JOEYS JOIN CARLTON

Australian Joey team-member Josh Kennedy and AIS Player Daniel Vasilevski will joined their Carlton team mates yesterday (Monday) for their first training session.

Kennedy scored the penalty against the USA which put them into the World Cup Final against Brazil in New Zealand last month. A 6'3 striker, Kennedy is regarded as one of Australia's most promising talents. Vasilevski is an AIS mem-

ber, who has excelled in the right back position which caught the eye of Senior Coach Stuart Munro.

"Both players are exciting talents, and I'm really looking forward to them joining the squad. To have two of the countries most promising young players join us at this stage of the season further strengthens the team and gives us even greater depth," said Munro.

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NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

GIPPSLAND FALCONS MARCONI STALLIONS

0
2

By Damian Tripodi

A struggling Marconi took three precious points from an equally struggling Gippsland Falcons with two late goals in a game where both sides painfully toiled for control in a lacklustre contest.

Both sides had chances, but apart from a few individual efforts, neither really impressed. Luck and emotions played a part in Marconi's goals.

The visitors broke the deadlock at the 76th minute when Brad Maloney, from 35 metres out on the left side send a floater which, assisted by the wind and misjudged by Gippsland keeper Bojo Jevdjovic ended up in the far top corner of the net.

Sparks flew and emotions ran rampant when late in the game, Marconi's Dominic Longo was red carded for tripping Robbie Puca, who for several minutes lay motionless and had to be carried off the ground.

In the 93rd minute the fate of the game was truly sealed when Vlado Zoric was able to take advantage of Gippsland defensive error to score his team's second.

"After being one goal down we took a gamble which didn't work" stated Gippsland Falcons coach Jeff Hopkins, "but we rather go out fighting than settle for a 1-0 loss."

For Marconi, it was a welcome return to the winning list following a humiliating home loss to the Football Kingz last week, whilst for Gippsland it was the end of two great wins and one draw in the last three outings.

The game began with the Gippslanders immediately in attack, but without the catalyst and precision of previous performances.

Adrian Savage was unlucky not to have bathed himself in glory at the eighth minute, when his close-in shot rebounded off the legs of Marconi keeper Michael Turnbull.

The resulting corner, taken by Robbie Puca curled beautifully towards the top left corner of the goal mouth, but went just wide. Puca repeated almost the identical action five minutes later.

The Falcons meanwhile began to find cohesion and for the next 10 minutes kept the Marconi defence busy.

Mainly through the creative work of Brad Maloney and Vlado Zoric, Marconi lifted their game slightly about half way through the first stanza and showed how dangerous they can be when given a bit of space, with Brendan Renaud breaking away from the edge of the box to hit the cross bar.

At the 29th Christian Care forced Falcons keeper Bojo Jevdjovic into an outstretched fingertip deflection and two minutes later Maloney's header just missed the cross bar.

The Falcons, however, had more of the ball and continued to put pressure on the Stallions.

Neither side was able to capitalize in the early minutes of the second half with both sides trying to mount attacks, but without success.

With the entry into the park of the elusive Francis Awaritefe 15 minutes into the half, the tide turned slightly in favour of Marconi. Awaritefe, although tightly marked by Dean Fak, managed to create some opportunities with Chad Gibson making a valid attempt at goal.

At the end of the game, Gippsland coach, Jeff Hopkins stated that it was an even game and that his team played well. "The goal was unexpected, he didn't mean it (Referring to Maloney), it blue across and Bojo (Jevdjovic) misjudged it."

His counterpart, Eddie Krncevic, himself a former Gippsland captain, on the contrary, stated that the Maloney goal was a well calculated shot. "It is never easy coming to Gippsland. It was a matter of who scored first. I was very happy with the boys, they showed a lot of character. I am sorry about the incident, it didn't really merit a red card, but I am happy with the three points."



Eddie Krncevic: Happy with the points.

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS PERTH GLORY

3
2

By Greg Danvers

Five games without loss, including four consecutive wins, has the Newcastle Breakers one point outside top six after their 3-2 win over Perth Glory at Breakers Stadium on Friday night.

In front of 4127 fans the Breakers set a club record of four consecutive wins.

Perth coach Bernd Stange may stay home in Perth next year and just send the three points over after falling 3-2 to the Breakers for the second time in as many seasons against the Breakers in Newcastle.

"Next year we should send the three points to Newcastle and stay at home and train," Stange said after the match.

"We can't beat Newcastle I don't know why, last year we lost both games and today as well I think we were the better team."

"Their (Newcastle) defence was very strong and they play with big hearts; we were not able to create enough chances for a win."

Newcastle went in front in the 19th minute through John Buonavoglia. Beating the off-side trap Buonavoglia latched onto a Shane Pryce through ball and worked into the box and let a left-foot screamer go that went past Perth 'keeper Jason Petkovic into the net.

Pryce made it 2-0 five minutes later from a free kick that went through the wall and under a diving Petkovic. Referee Con Diomis awarded a doubtful free kick against Petkovic for carrying the ball outside the box on a clearance.

Bobby Despotovski reduced the gap in the 28th minute with a great goal from 20 metres out. Under pressure from Pryce, with his back to goal, Despotovski turned and fired in a shot that whizzed past Breakers 'keeper Bob Catlin.

Former Breaker Troy Halpin, after several failed header clearances by the Breakers, chested the ball down and volleyed past an outstretched Catlin to lock up the score at 2-2 in the 34th minute.

Well into first half injury time Travis Dodd put away from close range after striker Andy Harper sprinted away down the right. A well weighted cross found Dodd who slotted the ball into the top right corner for the winner.

The second half was scoreless with Perth's Con Boutsianis denied by Catlin in the 76th minute. Catlin tipped a Boutsianis header over the bar.

"I am ecstatic about our performance against a side of quality," Newcastle coach Lee Sterrey said.

"They play some great creative football and make some holes in you."

"We will fight for everything, we will fight tooth and nail and sometimes spirit can beat the best of teams on the day."

"It was all important for us to win at home to get our supporters well and truly behind these blokes."

"Perth got on a roll tonight for around twenty minutes and scored two goals and come from behind 0-2 to equalise."

"But we hung tough, the Newcastle sides of old would have probably rolled over but we didn't roll over we came back and scored a third one before half-time."

"There is plenty of character in this team and that's what's getting us through at the end of the day."

"We have got plenty of skill and potential. A lot more than people give us credit for but that's fine by me."

"Everybody is putting their hand up and having a go at the moment and you can't ask much more than that from your players."

"If a team is too good for us we take our hat off to them but we are going to fight tooth and nail for everything from here to the end of the season and people are going to fear coming to Newcastle to play us."



Lee Sterrey: Thorn in Perth's side.

AUCKLAND KINGZ MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

3
3

By Daniel Giorelando

The Melbourne Knights were unlucky to come away from Auckland with only a draw last Friday night as both poor refereeing decisions as well as a lack of luck cost the visitors as the Auckland Kingz scrambled to a 3-3 draw.

The Knights, who went into the game against the Kingz with only a win from five starts away from home, must have felt hard done by with some controversial refereeing decisions going against them, including two penalties as well as a controversial late offside decision against Adrian Cervinski.

With nine minutes to go and the Knights up by 3-2, Adrian Cervinski was unmarked and on his way to goal after receiving a long clearance by keeper Martin John and even though the linesman had not flagged for offside, referee Gerry Connolly called Cervinski back.

Understandably Cervinski and the Knights were not too happy with the decision and their frustration was compounded only five minutes later in the 86th minute as the Kingz drew level through substitute Jonathan Perry's header.

The Knights who led all night, took the lead in the 35th minute through Ivan Kelic who pulled out a 25-yard screamer which Auckland keeper Jason Batty could only parry into his net.

Kelic, who received the ball on the left side of the field after a quick break out from the defence, cut back in field, beating defender Chay Bunce and then unleashing a stunning strike towards goal.

Cervinski and Kelic were a constant menace to the Auckland defence, who struggled to contain their influence on the game.

After the game Kelic, who was pleased with his performance, confirmed that even though the team was disappointed by not getting all three points, the 3-3 draw was a good result.

"I'm quite happy with my own performance, I scored two goals but it would have been better if we had a win but we are happy with the draw."

"We had a man more in the second half and we blew it by losing another man which put us under pressure for the rest of the game."

However after taking the lead late in the first half, the Knights were to soon relinquish their advantage a minute before the break.

Dragi Nasteovski gave away a silly penalty and captain Harry Ngata converted from the spot to make it 1-1.

Right on the stroke of half time, Mennillo was shown the first of two red cards on the night for a silly dive, an error which in the end cost the Kingz any realistic chance of winning.

And only 11 minutes after the break, Kelic made use of the numerical advantage taking back the lead for the Knights with a diving header from just on the six yard box, after being fed by Kiratzoglou on the right.

But once again the game was to take another turn, this time the dismissal of Knights midfielder Dragi Nasteovski who received his second yellow on the night for a foul on Marcus Stergiopoulos.

In the 70th minute yet another moment of controversy which resulted in yet another penalty for the home side.

Team manager Wynton Rufer was felled in the box by the right leg of keeper Martin John, the Knights keeper lucky not to be given a red card for the tackle.

Ngata for the second time on the night converted from the spot and once again the Kingz were back in the game.

But for the third time on the night, the Knights edged themselves ahead again, this time through substitute Brandon Vassallo who was left free in the box and made no mistake, beating the keeper to his left from 10 yards out.

Whilst the Kingz were down on the scoreboard, you could sense that the game was not over by a long shot although following the Cervinski offside decision, it should have been.

Instead of having a great chance to go up by two goals, the Knights found themselves equal in the 86th minute as Auckland substitute Jonathan Perry headed in a cross from Lee Jones, leaving the keeper with no chance.

Both teams had chances to win in the dying minutes of the match, Stuart Riddle had the best chance, his shot deflected only inches wide of the post.

After the game, Auckland manager Wynton Rufer was disappointed with yet another draw at home, their third in six games, their form in New Zealand not as superior as the record away from North Harbour.

"In the end we were lucky to get away with a point, we were always trailing," said Rufer.

"We are disappointed because we have been struggling at home, apparently we have the best away record but I prefer to have the best home record."

The Knights deserved the come away from Auckland with all three points, the draw, their first of the season, was a lot less than what they deserved whereas Auckland must improve their poor home form.



WOLLONGONG WOLVES CANBERRA COSMOS

3
0

By Otto Bader

On Sunday night at Brandon Park the conditions were miserable and wet and were, not helped by recent treatment to eliminate a turf bug requiring plenty of watering.

The game started with gusto and both sides tried to obtain an advantage. Cosmos probably had their best opportunities in the first 15 minutes but after that they seemed to disappear and it was all Wolves.

Despite having more than enough chances the home side needed time to settle. Striker Saso Petrovski hit the first of his two goals in the 15th minute and added another one towards the end of the game in the 83rd, with Scott Chipperfield scoring in the 77th minute.

It was a deserved win, acknowledged by Tom Sermanni, the Canberra coach. Petrovski had several more scoring chances and the tireless Matt Horsley for the Wolves placed three good headers on target, only just saved or missing narrowly.

The Cosmos' David Winnie cracked a free-kick the 24th minute from just outside the box which went just over the bar.

That was it for the visitors, everything else they hit was an easy catch for the Wolves keeper.

Wolves coach Nick Theodorakopoulos started with Noel Spencer and Alvin Ceccoli and had George Souris, David Huxley and Esala Masi on the bench.

The first half started with a fury, striker Saso Petrovski hitting the upright from the kick-off. Matt Horsley headed over the crossbar, both strikers Petrovski and Stuart Young had chances with the empty goal begging.

The Wolves supporters were sitting on the edge of their seats and had to wait until the 77th minute for the second goal. It was well taken from a through ball. The keeper came out trying to narrow the angle, but the fast Chipperfield finished well, much to the relief of the crowd.

It was now only a matter of time before the third goal came from Saso Petrovski, well taken, no chance for the keeper. In between several more chances for the home team were missed. Canberra never looked like threatening the Wolves' goal.

Nick Theodorakopoulos said he was satisfied with the win against a difficult opposition, he thought his team only converted about 30 percent of their chances and admitted the wet ground conditions were tough for the players.

He was rather proud of his players to show strength in the physical sense, never stopping even though many passes slipped away on the greasy surface.



Saso Petrovski: Man of the match.

Canberra players, did not do the job expected of them. Their passing looked poor with two many errors in defence. On the night his side did not perform to his directions.

Man of the match for the Wolves was named striker Saso Petrovski with excellent performances by Matt Horsley and Robert Stanton.

For Canberra the outstanding players could be named as goalkeeper Grant Barlow, despite letting in three, he prevented many more and Jason Polak in midfield.

The crowd was 2,497 as due to the poor weather conditions only the hard core fans were brave enough to come out on a miserable Sunday night.

TURN TO PAGE 32 MATCH STATISTICS

PIRATES PLUNDER IN NIGHT SERIES AT PIRATE PARK

By Allan Crisp

The Port Adelaide Lion Soccer Club is successfully filling the void left since the long running Ampol Cup night series was discontinued.

Petroleum giant Ampol backed the popular summer series at Hindmarsh Stadium for an Australian record 32 seasons of continuous soccer sponsorship.



Croydon Kings coach Phil Scardigno: Going for a hat-trick.

Ambitious minor championship winners Port Lion Pirates stepped into the breach in 1993, calling their competition, the Len Alagich memorial night Series, in honour of their former player, administrator and South Australian Soccer Federation life member, the late Len Alagich.

This season's series kicks-off at Pirate Park (John Hart Reserve) on January 17 and continues until February 9 with double-header programs each Monday and Wednesday nights.

Hosts, Port Lion Pirates will be joined by Croydon Kings, Campbelltown Red Devils, White City Warriors, Raiders, Elizabeth City Rams, Para Hills Knights and the Adelaide Cobras.

Two groups of four teams play on a round robin basis during the first three weeks, followed by the

semi-finals, with the grand final and third place play-off in week four.

Croydon Kings will be shooting for a hat-trick, having won successive night series titles at Pirate Park during the past two seasons.

Port Lion secretary, Gene Lomman regards the series as a valuable vehicle for clubs and coaches as they gear towards their respective Premier and State League competitions.

"It allows the coaches to try out new recruits and team configurations in competitive situations," Lomman said.

"Many up and coming players have been blooded into the big league through playing in this pre-season competition."

Past winners - 1993: Blue Eagles; 1994: Blue Eagles; 1995: Raiders; 1996: Para Hills Knights; 1997: Port Lion Pirates; 1998: Croydon Kings; 1999: Croydon Kings.

NEW HOMES FOR RAIDERS AND BLUE EAGLES

It's been a long time coming, but season 2000 will herald house warming parties for South Australian Premier League clubs, Blue Eagles and Raiders.

Blue Eagles will be first cab off the rank in redirecting its headquarters from Adey Reserve to its new multi-million dollar complex at Marsden where competitive games are expected to be played from the beginning of the new season.

Raiders have an equally luxurious facility at Gepps Cross nearing completion and should be able to vacate Hanson Reserve in favour of their spanking new grounds in time for kick-off.

A farewell party was held at Adey Reserve last week and the key has already been turned at the Eagles \$2.5 million Marsden sporting complex.

The Lower Portrush Road facility has an impressive main pitch and three practice pitches and spectator comforts second only to Hindmarsh Stadium in Adelaide.

The soccer centre at Gepps Cross was made possible when the Croatian



Allan Crisp

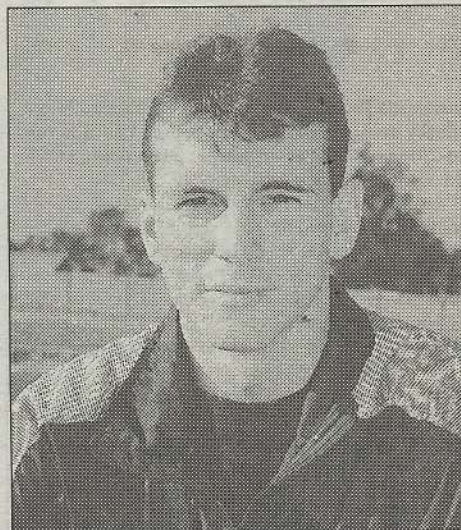
Sports Centre of SA Inc, negotiated with the South Australian Government to buy the land situated north-east of the cycling Super Drome at State Sports Park.

Neatly situated alongside the cycling drome, The Pines hockey stadium and the lacrosse centre, the soccer centre will include four soccer pitches under lights, an indoor soccer stadium, several function centres capable of catering for up to 1000 patrons and a public picnic area shaded by sail clothes.

There will also be three tennis courts and a basketball court. Building of the complex started in January, with the soccer pitches under way in June.



Fraser Keegan: Ex-Birkalla and now Port Lions Pirates midfielder.



Michael Brooks: Back with the Blue Eagles.

YOUNG HOPEFULS ABROAD

Adelaide teenagers, Dimitri Brinias, Terry Smith, Andrew Carmen and Nial Fay have been bitten by the travel bug.

Brinias, at the tender age of 15, has made his senior professional debut for English second division club Bourmouthe's reserve team.

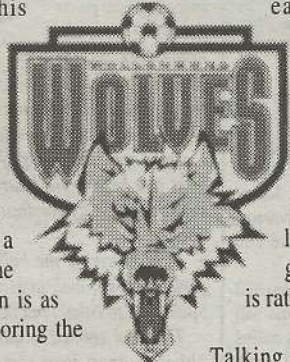
The former West Adelaide and Port Lion goalkeeper is tall for his age and big on ability.

Smith of SASI and Elizabeth City and Carmen from SASI and Enfield Falcons are training with Everton, while Fay (Para Hills) is trialing with Leeds United.

Allan Crisp can be heard with John Perin and Robbie Popplestone on Adelaide Radio 5RPH (1197AM) each Tuesday from 7.30am-9am.

WOLLONGONG NEWS

Last Sunday against Canberra Cosmos Anthony Surjan played his 100th game for the Wolves. One of the very talented experienced players in the squad and very talented play maker, he came to the Wolves four years ago from the state league and has added a touch of creative class to the team. His preferred position is as attacking midfielder and scoring the odd goal.



Wolves supporters shop has been earmarked by responsible director Mario Mastroianni as creating additional financial funds. Wolves merchandise items have been increased from originally 26 or so memorabilia to many more like drink mugs, whiskey glasses and beer steins. Mario is rather proud of his creation.

■■■■

Talking of being innovative, a joint venture between basketball and soccer for one weekend with both teams at home has been organised. Basketball Hawks's General Manager Chuck Harmison and Wolves boss Graeme Haney are inviting sports lovers to buy a \$10 ticket to see the Hawks playing Sydney at the Entertainment Centre on Friday and use the same ticket to see Wolves on Sunday at Brandon Park.

This unusual double header could be repeated if both clubs report healthy turnouts. It is a step in the right direction with two national league teams in two different sports combining their efforts. Original and well planned, good luck to both.



Anthony Surjan: 100 games.

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NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

SYDNEY UNITED1
PARRAMATTA POWER2

By John Economos

Parramatta Power last Sunday had to battle hard before finally over-powering a defiant Sydney United to run out 1-2 winners at Edensor Park, in a non-violent match that saw both sides have a player sent off.

If the first two red cards were in doubt, there most certainly should have been a third for an incident midway through the second session which the referee inexplicably left unpunished. A robust and most over zealous Power midfielder flooded United's skipper and central marker Velimir Kupresak near the touchline with a violent over-the-ball tackle with the vicious kick shattering Kupresak's shin pad to leave a long gash from just below the knee and right down his shin-bone.

Kupresak will long remember this match, not only for escaping in having his leg broken, but on a much more honourable and pleasant note, broke Manis Lamond's long standing record for most games played for United. Big 'Vela' has now knocked up a wonderful 239 'not out' for his beloved Sydney United.

With the scoreline at 0-1 and just six minutes from the break, referee Matthew Breeze promptly, although this time somewhat harshly, first marched the Power's sweeper Milan Blagojevic for a foul on United's striker Nick Bosevski.

Ironically it was again six minutes, but after the break, that United's halftime substitute Ray Younis also saw Breeze's red card. Younis lashed out at the Power's 17-year-old marker Mark Byrnes, who was making his debut start, whilst still on the ground.

United's coach David Ratcliffe had brought on Younis and pushed him upfront to link up with strikers Nick Bosevski and Pondejlik to pressure the Power.

The Power had drawn first blood in the 20th minute when striker Jon Angelucci whipped in a fine cross from the right that midfielder Peter Bennett cracked at the target from the back post but was finely blocked by United's 'keeper Brett Hughes. From the rebound, left wingback Steve Eagleton slammed a right-footed, hard and low drive that finally flashed into the target.

Right on the half hour mark, United's mobile striker Tommy Pondejlik broke through on the right and went perilously close to 'balancing the books' at the other end. However his drive flashed just outside the base of the far post.

The Power then steamed ahead to a 0-2 lead when stylish striker Mile Sterjovski scored the best goal of the match. Gaining possession on the right Sterjovski elegantly glided past his defender and veered into the box to slam a low drive into the far corner.

In the 64th minute United's midfielder Kain Rastell and Pondejlik combined very well to set up Bosevski for a shot on target, but a brilliant block by the lanky Andrew Crews denied United a golden chance to pull one back.

With 20 minutes left, United valiantly started to bombard the Power lines and Bosevski did extremely well to drill into the target a wonderful flat square ball fired in from the right by the alert and unselfish Pondejlik.

With seconds left, United almost pulled the game out of the fire, but Pondejlik's long flat 20-metre drive from in front whistled barely outside the base of the left upright.

Best performers for the Power were their outstanding lanky custodian Andrew Crews, Australia's Under 17s skipper and the Power's central marker Mark Byrnes, plus powerful striker Jon Angelucci, whilst for United, 18-year-old midfielder Nahuel Arrarte, strikers Pondejlik and Nick Bosevski did very well.

It was in fact a most heroic effort by the teenaged Arrarte, who had only two weeks prior had an operation on his knee.

A somewhat relaxed Power coach David Mitchell later reflected: "I thought we were doing well till we got our man (Blagojevic) sent off which then made things difficult for us as they (United) threw men forward. At 0-2 I thought we were doing it confidently till they scored, which immediately put us on the back foot, but they played very well and made things tough for us. I felt that our Mark Byrnes was 'Man Of The Match'. We contained Pondejlik (United's striker Tommy) even though he played well. The way we played tonight, we can match anyone in the League."

Mitchell who coached United over the past two seasons before joining the Power, and then during the off season signed up 14 of United's players for the Power, lightly jested by stating: "I thought we (the Power) felt more at 'home' (Edensor Park) than they did."

Meanwhile United's coach David Ratcliffe was understandably far from happy, not only with the loss result, but with his half-time substitute Younis lasting just five minutes before being sent off for violent play. "Ray (Younis) was totally selfish. If you want to fight because someone tackles you hard, then go down and play in the park. I still thought we had more shots on-goal and Crews (Power's goalkeeper) made some good saves. People must give us more time as this is a new team. We had to chase the game and in the end I was forced to push three upfront."

SYDNEY OLYMPIC2
BRISBANE STRIKERS0

By Daniel Giorelando

Sydney Olympic consolidated their lead at the top of the NSL ladder following their 2-0 win against the Brisbane Strikers at Belmore Sports ground last Sunday night.

Whilst Olympic stayed two points clear at the top, the loss for the Strikers relegated them to their third straight loss, this coming after a perfect start the season, going nine games without defeat.

The Strikers slump has come about through their of pentation of the opposition's defence. With only one goal in the last three games, Strikers coach John Kosmina must be worried about where his side's goals are going to come from.

NSL Top goalscorer Paul Foster has not found the net since his round nine hat-trick against South Melbourne and their solitary goal in the last three games, that in round 10 against Newcastle came via an own goal.

But whilst the Strikers have struggled to hit the net, Olympic who have the best defensive record, have one of the best attacking records around, and that was enhanced with a clinical performance against the Strikers.

Goals from Brett Emerton and Pablo Cardozo settled the game in favor of the home side although it was the influence of another South American, Gabriel Mendez that helped swing the game Olympics way.

Mendez was clearly the best player on the park, his skill and creativity ultimately proved to much for the Strikers defence and Mendez can count himself unlucky not to have scored in the second half as he hit the post following a typically defence splitting run.

And the loss was further soured for the visitors as former Olympic player Nick Meredith was sent off three minutes from the end for his second yellow, after a tackle from behind on Olympics Chris Kalantzis.

The game at that stage was over as a contest, Olympics defence watertight and their utilisation of the wet and windy conditions was more constructive and direct than their opponents.

Running with the help of a strong breeze in the first Half, Olympic put it to good use creating chance after chance, Zlatko Arambasic going close on two occasions within the first 17 minutes.

The first coming from a Cardozo cross, Arambasic free in the box took his opportunity first time but put it wide to the left. His second chance coming from a header which went only centimeters wide of Clint Boltons's right-hand post.

Olympic continued to pack on the pressure but it wasn't until two minutes before the break that the league leaders could finally break through the resilient Strikers defence.

Pablo Cardozo controlled the ball deep in the box, his cross-found an unmarked Emerton who headed back across the face of goal and past Brisbane keeper Clint Bolton.

The goal seemed to deflate the spirits of the visitors and in the second half, although running with the aid of the breeze, the Strikers failed to make any inroads into the Olympic half.

The first real chance of the second half fell Olympic's way as Man of the match Mendez made a great run through the centre beating a defender before shooting under the body of keeper Bolton, only to see his shot thunder off the right post.

But only two minutes later, Olympic wrapped up the match as Cardozo put in his teams second on the night and his sixth for the season.

Chris Zoricich sent over a speculative lob from the right side which hung in the breeze, the ball finding the head of Arambasic who centered his volley back into the box to find a free Cardozo who volleyed home.

But only two minutes after Olympics second, Brisbane had a golden opportunity to pull one back, Peter Dwyer going close from a long throw as his left foot turn and shot went only inches wide of the right post.

For the final half an hour, the game seemed to lack the fire and passion that it had begun with, Olympics defence never looked like getting pierced and Olympics midfield in particular Mendez running rings around the Strikers.

Understandably, Strikers coach John Kosmina was furious with his teams effort and commitment, singling out some stupid mistakes by some senior players' as one of the keys to his teams disastrous run over the past three weeks.



Pablo Cardozo: Scorer.

SOUTH MELBOURNE1
CARLTON SC2

By Bert van Bedaf

Carlton general manager Lou Sticca and director Peter Jess, both described it as "a defining moment in the club's history". "To go one down and come back to win the game is bloody beautiful," Jess said.

The almost 13,000 crowd watched a "thriller at Lakeside". It was without doubt one of the most exciting matches of the season in Melbourne.

As Ricky Martin crooned over the speakers, "This is the Cup of Life" and the Samba girls in light pink and blue hues added exuberant entertainment to his tune, the game erupted minutes later with more dramatic tension than a Shakespearean play.

South Melbourne was reduced to 10 men by half time. Carlton also copped a red card. Carlton captain Andrew Marth was the hero, netting both goals, as the Blues came from behind to beat South 2-1 at Bob Jane stadium. It was South's second home defeat in two seasons and coach Ange Postecoglou called it "disappointing".

"It's a big step for us," Carlton coach Stuart Munro said. "It is good for the confidence of the players for the remainder of the season. We have to play them three more times and that's a tough task. South is a tough opponent," he said.

"It's obviously disappointing for us," Postecoglou said. "We worked hard today. We got down to 10 men early and we did really well to fight back. When we were both down to 10 men, we couldn't hold them (Carlton) back. We're going through one of those frods," he said.

South, without injured captain Paul Trimboli, relied on Michael Curcija, John Anastasiadis and Goran Lozanovski to put the Carlton defence under pressure. At the other end Alex Moreira and John Markovski were the spearheads for Carlton, with Stuart Slater the third danger man, who gave Lozanovski a rough time, which later turned nasty.

In the middle, David Clarkson and George Goutzioulis stood toe-to-toe with Lubo Lapsansky and Andrew Marth. But those early skirmishes were ordinary fare compared with what lay ahead.

Markovski had a near chance. Anastasiadis put his brother Dean to the test. Slater caused havoc on the left. Curcija spread fear into the Carlton backline. Markovski's in-swinging corners were vicious and cleared. South on the break was positively lethal, but not fatal against the tight Blues defence of Sean Douglas, Mark Atkinson and David McPherson.

The game exploded with a dinkum brawl in the 35th minute. Con Blatsis challenged Dean Anastasiadis after the Carlton 'keeper had saved the ball.

Marth pulled Blatsis away. There was plenty of pushing and shoving.

Referee Eddie Lennie got out the yellow cards. One each for Nick Orlic, Marth and Markovski. Steve Panopoulos, who had taken Marth to task, got off free. McPherson who shook Panopoulos in anger was also left off Lennie's list.

The focus returned on soccer in the 41st minute. A Markovski backheel pass put Moreira in the clear, but South 'keeper Chris Jones saved the Brazilian striker's shot.

The next dramatic moment occurred on the stroke of half-time. Stuart robbed Lozanovski off the ball in the Carlton half. Big Loza turned and tackled Slater from behind. Lennie gave him a yellow card.

Lozanovski remonstrated (swore at Lennie) and walked away. Lennie called him back, pulled out his second yellow card and then red. Lozanovski had to be restrained from having a go at Lennie and left the ground in tears. Lennie played five minutes of extra time before he was booed off the pitch at the break.

Carlton pressed from the start with Marth having his shot blocked eight minutes into the second half. South relied on the counter. Marth actually struck the net in the 57th minute, but Lennie gave offside.

Lapsansky fired on target three minutes later, but Jones, between the posts in place of the suspended Milan Ulvaracz, saved easily. Slater fired wide in the 62nd minute and Markovski blasted his free-kick into the South wall.

Lennie evened the player score when he red-carded McPherson in the 69th minute. McPherson had taken the ball out of defence to the half-way line, where Panopoulos pulled his shirt. McPherson reacted as if he was going to land a punch and Lennie promptly sent the Carlton defender on his way.

Curcija quickly proved how big a hole it caused in the Carlton defence.

In the 73rd minute, Panopoulos crossed the ball into the box and the South striker headed it into the net. The cries of "Hellas, Hellas" still echoed around Bob Jane, when Con Blatsis pulled down Mike Conroy inside the box in the 83rd minute and Lennie pointed to the spot. Marth stepped up and struck home the equaliser under severe pressure.

The script could not have been written better, when Marth scrambled home the winner in the fifth minute of time added-on. Lapsansky laid of a free-kick and Markovski curled it into the box. The South defence cleared poorly.

The ball fell for Marth who blasted it home to extract revenge for Carlton's 2-1 grand final loss to South two seasons ago.

NORTHERN SPIRIT0
ADELAIDE CITY3

By Daniel Giorelando

Damian Mori hat trick helped the Adelaide City Force to only their second win of the season and their first in over two months as they defeated Northern Spirit by 3-0 at North Sydney Oval last Friday night.

In a game that failed to reach any major heights, Mori stood out amongst the pack, vindicating his controversial selection in the recent Socceroo squad as the Force, bottom of the table coming into the game completely dominated the inconsistent Spirit.

Mori's coolness and lethal finishing in front of goal left the Spirit with no spirit as the home side never troubled the visitors following the first of Mori's three goals in the 33rd minute.

Spirit coach Graham Arnold was understandably frustrated with his team's effort along with the poor marking of danagerman Mori who ultimately made the Spirit pay.

"We normally don't concede goals from set pieces. He (Mori) was unchallenged. He was supposed to be picked up and wasn't," said Arnold.

"We won the last two games with effort and guts and tonight it wasn't there. If we keep going like that we won't be in the top six."

But whilst Mori was the clear stand out, youngster Nick Sabljak was a constant thorn in the Spirit's defence and Sabljak's combinations with Mori eventually sunk the home side, Sabljak having a hand in all three goals.

Force coach Zoran Matic, sprung a surprise early on in the play, using Carl Veart as stopper instead of his normal position upfront alongside Mori.

Whether the move was in desperation or tactical, it worked wonders, the Force defence never looked like being broken and their attacking influence created chance upon chance of which Mori converted.

But the Spirit, who were coming off a two-game winning streak started the brighter of the two and should have taken the lead through Abbas Saad in the 19th minute.

Once again it was the involvement of both Graham Arnold and Robbie Slater who helped carve out a golden chance for Saad, who snapped at a volley just on the edge of the six yard box, after a header back into the path of Saad by Arnold.

The game lacked flair and creativity and was craving a goal, but that was to change in the 33rd minute when Mori popped up from a corner to put home a rare headed goal.

It was one of the more easier goals that Mori will ever score, as he was left unmarked on eight yards out, his header from a Sabljak corner coming off the bottom of the bar before crossing the line.

The hero for the Northern Spirit in the last few weeks has been John Perosh and he once again kept the Spirit alive, pulling out a superb low save from Bradley Hassell's 23-yard drive in the 42nd minute.

Spirit created two good chances, one on either side of half time but once again poor finishing cost the home side, Slater shooting straight at the feet of keeper Wilson Knezevic before the break and Tony Perinich shooting wide in the 55th minute.

Spirit were made to pay for their inadequacies in front of goal just before the hour mark as Mori slotted away his second, once again thanks to a great through ball by Sabljak.

After receiving the ball near halfway, Sabljak slotted a perfect through ball to Mori who beat an advancing offside Spirit trap to calmly put the ball past an advancing Perosh.

The goal seemed to quench any fire that the Spirit had, although apart from some industrious play by Phil Moss and the injection of Shane Lyons late in the match, Spirit lacked direction.

Eventually Mori completed his hat-trick in the 79th minute and once again it came via a cross from Sabljak who fed Mori who was once again left free inside the box and made no mistake.

The force now go into the Christmas break with renewed confidence and knowledge that the top six is still a possibility whereas the Spirit have a number of worries including injuries and a lack of form.

The loss of Abbas Saad through injury is another worry for Arnold. Saad has been one of the more consistent players for the Spirit this season and his loss will be a big blow for the Spirit in the coming weeks.



TURN TO PAGE 32 FOR MATCH STATISTICS

ABSWS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

ABSWS is proud to re-introduce the 'ABSWS Player of the Year' award. Having run the award for many years already, we felt delighted to re-introduce this prestigious award.

The award is voted on by the journalists who cover each match for ABSWS. They award three points for the Man of the match as well as 2 and 1 points respectively to the next best on the park.

ROUND 12

Auckland vs Knights

3- I.Kelic (MK)
2- A.Kovacevic (MK)
1- W.Rufer (AK)

Nthn Spirit vs Adelaide City

3- D.Mori (Ad)
2- N.Sabljak (Ad)
1- A.Costanzo (Ad)

Newcastle v Perth

3- J.Buonavoglia (NB)
2- C.Boutsianis (PG)
1- G.Moore (NB)

Gippsland vs Marconi

3- B.Maloney (MF)
2- V.Zoric (MF)
1- M.Durakovic (GF)

Sydney Utd vs Parramatta

3- M.Byrnes (PP)
2- N.Arrarte (SU)
1- A.Crews (PP)

Syd. Olympic vs Brisbane

3- G.Mendez (SO)
2- P.Cardozo (SO)
1- Z.Arambasic (SO)

Sth Melbourne vs Carlton

3- A.Marsh (C)
2- M.Curcija (SM)
1- J.Markovski (C)

Wollongong vs Canberra

3- S.Petrovski (WW)
2- M.Horsley (WW)
1- R.Stanton (WW)

PROGRESSIVE POINTS

(AFTER Rd 12)

A.Harper

15

A.Crews

14

P.Cardozo

13

M.Curcija

12

M.Durakovic

11

A.Costanzo

10

J.Buonavoglia

10

G.Mendez

9

I.Kelic

9

D.Cervinski

9

R.Stanton

9

M.Turnball

8

L.Lapsanky

8

A.Marsh

8

J.Griffiths

8

C.Boutsianis

8

S.Chipperfield

8

M.Sterjovski

7

Newcastle

Parramatta

Sydney Olympic

South Melbourne

Gippsland

Adelaide City

Newcastle

Sydney Olympic

Melbourne Knights

Wollongong

Wollongong

Marconi

Carlton

Carlton

Parramatta

Perth

Wollongong

Parramatta

NSL CLUBS IN CRISIS

By Bert van Bedaf

COMMENT

THERE is, of course, a sense of déjà vu about yet another reform of the National Soccer League. The latest changes will involve the omission of four clubs, as the competition will be reduced from 16 to 12 clubs, and possibly a drawn-out legal battle which Soccer Australia and the aggrieved clubs can ill-afford.

Soccer Australia has also decided on the formation of a second division of the national league most likely to soften the blow for any sacked clubs and to offer State premier league clubs the incentive of moving up a rung.

Since the NSL was established in 1977, the then Australian Soccer Federation (now Soccer Australia) has been tinkering with the format, the number of clubs, grand final play-offs and so on for as many years, amounting to 23 changes so far.

But none was so intervening as the axing of three clubs under chairman David Hill's reign five years ago.

Hill also took the clubs on in the courts.

Parramatta Eagles, Heidelberg United and the Melbourne Zebras (formerly Brunswick United Juventus) lost.

The Eagles now play in the NSW Super League. Heidelberg has just returned to the Victorian Premier League, after a season in the State League, and the Zebras/Juventus no longer exist. History now seems to repeat itself, again.

Since the Hill era, several franchised clubs have joined the league.

Perth Glory, Northern Spirit, Carlton, Parramatta Power, Auckland Kings.

Known as the "entrepreneurial", or "mainstream" clubs, the new brigade wants the process of reform to accelerate.

Soccer Australia wants that as well, to take advantage of the Olympics hype surrounding the Olyroos and the Matildas, as well as accommodating a new NSL naming rights sponsor, rumored to be Lion Nathan, keen to conquer Australia with its Hahn beer.

The company has already secured naming rights to the Melbourne Cup, Australia's premier horse race, knocking Fosters out of the saddle.

Of the so-called "traditional" clubs, those with historic ethnic ties, the Marconi Stallions (Italian

heritage) and champion South Melbourne (Greek) are the most successful and entrenched components and sure to stay in the league.

Among Soccer Australia's lofty list of criteria for inclusion next season, it also stipulates the league must have a national spread. This means the inclusion of at least one club from Western Australia (Perth), Queensland (Brisbane Strikers), South Australia (Adelaide City Force), the ACT (Canberra Cosmos), New Zealand (Kings) and northern NSW (Newcastle and/or Wollongong), or new consortiums in place of less successful performers. It provides for a tight squeeze.

SA chairman Basil Scarcella is satisfied the soccer body has drawn up a reasonable plan, which was accepted by the clubs, even if they haven't agreed on the timing. Which is something that appears non-negotiable at the moment. SA will go ahead with the reforms for next season.

"We've put up what we believe is a balanced package of reforms. We're also proposing the introduction of a second division, which will give the opportunity to some of the clubs who perhaps miss out in the first to regroup and restructure if necessary and come back into the first division.

The second division also creates an opportunity

for the State leagues to participate in a higher competition.

"There are 16 teams in the national soccer league and we'll pick the best 12, based on a set of criteria. We are also inviting other consortiums to bid, if they're interested in participating in the NSL.

"There is no question we will have 12 clubs in the national soccer league next year. They will be the best 12 clubs in the land. The criteria will be used to determine who are the best 12 clubs. The clubs who come closest to the criteria will be the ones we'll choose.

"What we are concentrating on is creating a national soccer league, which is attractive to the corporate world and the public and importantly is viable in the long-term.

"If we can get those objectives obtained then we'll have a viable national league, which will see soccer prosper in this country," Scarcella said.

Despite the myriad of differences and disagreements that threaten to overshadow soccer's millennium prospects, including possible litigation, the prosperity of the world game in Australia is something everyone (clubs, supporters and officials) will and can agree on. How it is being achieved is a more problematic matter.

"There is no question we will have 12 clubs in the National Soccer League next year."



CANBERRA



Back Row (l-r): Harry Wardle (Strength and Conditioning Coach), Pat Woods (Masseur), Tony Brennan (Assistant), Tony Borgia (Team Manager), Tom Sermanni (Coach) **Middle Row (l-r):** Daniel Watkins, Ivo De Jesus, Glen, Tony Borgia (Team Manager), Tom Sermanni (Coach) **Front Row (l-r):** Andrew Clark, Ilija Prenzovski, Scott Conlon, Nicholas

1999/2000



COSMOS



(Coach), Nikola Mrdja, Toplica Popovich, Michael Musitano, Danny Burt, Simon Cummings (Sports Scientist),
Kolpak, Grant Barlow, Alex Castro, Angelo Konstantinou, Geoff Howarth, Jason Polak, Harry James
Purdue, Gabriel Gonzalez, David Arranz, Elliott Zwangobani

2000

National Youth League

NORTHERN DIVISION (ROUND 12)

FRIDAY 17 DECEMBER 1999

Newcastle Breakers6 Wollongong Wolves Colts0
(Juchniewicz 12, Rufo 15,
Angievski 26 pen, 65, Ross 44, 85)

SATURDAY 18 DECEMBER 1999

A.I.S.3 Marconi Stallions0
(Kennedy 36, 49, North 87)

SUNDAY 19 DECEMBER 1999

N.S.W.I.S.1 Parramatta Power1
(Lockhart 60) (Pfrengle 40)
Sydney Olympic3 Q.A.S.0
(Miot 31, Sinozic 69, Macallister 88)
Wollongong Wolves0 A.C.T.A.S.1
(Veljanovski 37)
Marconi Stallions Colts2 Newcastle Breakers Colts2
(Brosque 48, 51) (Haynes 21, 71)

| | P | W | D | B | L | F | A | Pts |
|--------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|
| A.I.S. | 13 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 51 | 14 | 29 |
| Parramatta Power | 11 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 32 | 6 | 29 |
| Sydney Olympic | 10 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 29 | 7 | 24 |
| Q.A.S. | 12 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 31 | 18 | 22 |
| Northern Spirit | 9 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 21 | 12 | 19 |
| Newcastle Breakers | 12 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 24 | 16 | 19 |
| Marconi Stallions | 10 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 16 | 18 | 18 |
| A.C.T.A.S. | 11 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 18 | 24 | 15 |
| N.S.W.I.S. | 10 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 18 | 10 | 14 |
| Sydney United | 8 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 17 | 17 | 13 |
| Sydney Olympic Academy | 10 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 24 | 39 | 12 |
| Wollongong Wolves | 10 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 10 | 17 | 10 |
| Newcastle Breakers Colts | 13 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 16 | 29 | 10 |
| Marconi Stallions Colts | 10 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 16 | 26 | 9 |
| Northern Spirit Colts | 9 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 23 | 8 |
| Sydney United Colts | 13 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 10 | 11 | 35 | 5 |
| Wollongong Wolves Colts | 9 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 39 | 1 |

MONDAY 20 DECEMBER 1999

Northern Spirit Colts v Sydney Olympic Academy
(To be played at North Sydney Oval - 5.30pm)

Northern Spirit v Sydney United Colts
(To be played at North Sydney Oval - 5.30pm)

Bye - Sydney United

By Theo Katsaros

Robert Angievski and David Ross snared doubles as the Newcastle Breakers demolished the Wollongong Wolves Colts by 6-0. The home side were favoured to beat the southern youngsters and were in total control of the match with a four-goal onslaught in the first half. Peter Juchniewicz and Joshua Rufo scored to make it 2-0 within the first quarter of an hour before Angievski and Ross added goals before the break. The second half saw Angievski and Ross complete the scoring for the home side who continue to show improvement after an unfortunate start to the season.

At the AIS Soccer Field the A.I.S. defeated the Marconi Stallions to take the Institute back to the top of the league for the first time since Round 6. An even first half ended when Joshua Kennedy put the home side into the lead in the 36th minute. The goal seemed to deflate the Stallions who succumbed to their hosts by 3-0. Kennedy bagged his double after 49 minutes and Jade North found the back of the net three minutes from time.

The N.S.W.I.S. and the Parramatta Power battled out 1-1 draw at Valentine Park. The result means the Power relinquish top spot on the ladder to the A.I.S. albeit on goal difference. The match was closely fought, as the score suggests, with the N.S.W.I.S. snatching the advantage after 40 minutes as Shane Lockhart found his scoring touch. The Power, still unbeaten in their inaugural season, equalised in the 60th minute via Monte Pfrengle. Neither side could find the elusive winner but would have been pleased to share the spoils.

Sydney Olympic also continued their unbeaten run with a convincing 3-0 victory over the Q.A.S. The Olympians added Joey Anthony Doumanis to their squad during the week and he impressed before being substituted after 70 minutes for the hosts. Olympic were always in command after Lee Miot opened the scoring in the 31st minute. The second half was brought to life after 69 minutes when Dylan Macallister threaded a perfect through ball into the path of Sebastian Sinozic who easily slotted the ball past the oncoming keeper. The Q.A.S. struck the crossbar late in the game before Macallister was gifted a goal after a blunder by Nathan Coe, the Q.A.S. keeper.

The A.C.T.A.S. travelled to Wollongong and secured all three points courtesy of a Goran Veljanovski strike in the 37th minute. The A.C.T.A.S. are capable of defeating any team in the league but their inconsistency sees them lying mid-table. The Wollongong Wolves are

another team that has not yet reached its potential. The Wolves have struggled this season after vying for a top four spot last season.

The Marconi Stallions Colts and the Newcastle Breakers Colts shared the points at Marconi Stadium on Sunday afternoon. The visitors took the lead in the 21st minute courtesy of Peter Haynes but the Stallions equalised just after half-time and in fact went ahead after 51 minutes. Alex Brosque who has increased his tally for the season to six scored both goals. However, the Breakers salvaged a point when Haynes scored his second for the match.

The remaining matches of Round 12 were played last night (Monday) at North Sydney Oval where Northern Spirit Colts tackled the Sydney Olympic Academy and the Northern Spirit clashed with the Sydney United Colts.

ROUND 13

TUESDAY 28 DECEMBER 1999

Wollongong Wolves Colts v N.S.W.I.S.
(Brandon Park No. 2 - 4.00pm)
Marconi Stallions Colts v Newcastle Breakers
(Marconi Stadium - 4.00pm)
Sydney United v Newcastle Breakers Colts
(Sydney United Sports Centre - 4.00pm)
Q.A.S. v Wollongong Wolves
(Suncorp Metway Stadium - 4.45pm)
A.C.T.A.S. v Northern Spirit
(Bruce Stadium - 5.00pm)
Parramatta Power v Sydney Olympic
(Parramatta Stadium - 5.30pm)
Northern Spirit Colts v Sydney United Colts
(Christie Park - 6.30pm)
Sydney Olympic Academy v A.I.S.
(Played on Sunday 5 December 1999)
Bye - Marconi Stallions

LEADING SCORERS

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|----|
| Elias Demourtzidis | A.I.S. | 11 |
| Russell Miner | Q.A.S. | 9 |
| Damian Pisano | Sydney Olympic | 7 |
| Franco Parisi | Sydney Olympic Academy | 7 |
| Grant Last | A.I.S. | 6 |
| Daniel Kukucka | Parramatta Power | 6 |

SOUTHERN DIVISION (ROUND 9)

SATURDAY 18 DECEMBER 1999

VIS4 ..Melbourne Knights2
(Naum Sekulovski 2, George Pantelidis, Jure Radosevic) (Anthony Pelikan, Juan Sastre)
Albury Wodonga4 ..Preston Lions4
(David Martin 2, Adam Griffiths, Dolevski) (Ali Ibrahim 3, Robert John Ritchie)
Gippsland Falcons1 ..Bulleen Inter1
(Igor Stojanac) (Ryan Ollerton)
Carlton4 ..Fawkner Blues0
(Deniz Ekici, Angelo Motsiopoulos, Mathew Nikolic, Ace Stojcevski)

SUNDAY 19 DECEMBER 1999

South Melbourne0 ..South Dandenong1
(Qemal Korcarevski)

Melb Knights Academy v Bye

| Team | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Carlton | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 37 | 3 | 24 |
| VIS | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 2 | 24 |
| Bulleen Inter Kings | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 22 | 11 | 19 |
| Melbourne Knights | 9 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 26 | 21 | 11 |
| South Dandenong | 8 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 12 | 11 |
| Gippsland Falcons | 7 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 15 | 11 |
| South Melbourne | 7 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 18 | 10 | 9 |
| Fawkner Blues | 8 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 20 | 8 |
| Albury Wodonga | 9 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 32 | 5 |
| Melbourne Knights Academy | 7 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 11 | 3 |
| Preston Lions | 9 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 48 | 1 |

ROUND 10

Wednesday 12 January 2000

Fawkner Blues v South Melbourne, (CB Smith Reserve, 6.30pm)

Saturday 15 January 2000

Gippsland Falcons v Preston Lions, (Falcons Stadium, 4 pm)

VIS v South Dandenong, (Grange Reserve, 4 pm)

Sunday 16 January 2000

Melbourne Knights v Melbourne Knights Academy,
(Knights Stadium, 3.30 pm)

Bulleen Inter v Carlton, (Mahoneys Reserve, 4 pm)

Albury Wodonga v Bye

By Roy Hay

The Victorian Institute of Sport beat Melbourne Knights by 4-2 last Saturday at Grange Reserve. Though the VIS won in the end, the Knights breached its goal line for the first time this season and Murray Baume reports that the visitors deserved more from the game in view of the effort they put into it.

George Pantelidis opened for the VIS in 12 minutes, but leading scorer Anthony Pelikan's tenth of the season brought the Knights level in 28 minutes. Two quick goals by Naum Sekulovski seemed to have given the VIS a clear break, but when Jure Radosevic pulled one back in 59 minutes it became a contest once more. The match was really not settled till the very last minute when Juan Sastre scored his second goal in as many matches since returning from long term injury.

Carlton kept up its league leadership on goal difference with a 4-0 win over Fawkner Blues at Hosken Reserve. Two goals in each half settled the result with Deniz Ekicic and Angelo Motsiopoulos getting the first two and Mathew Nikolic, probably the man of the match, and Ace Stojcevski the others. Colin Azzopardi and Marco Iacobaccio were top performers in a good all round effort by the Dark Blues, whose keeper was basically untroubled by the young Fawkner attack.

Gippsland Falcons and Bulleen Inter drew 1-1 at Mobil Stadium also on Saturday. Igor Stojanac scored on the stroke of half-time for the Falcons but Ryan Ollerton made sure the Bulleen side went home with the point it deserved in a very even contest.

Cheryle Martin reports that Preston Lions earned their first point of the season in an eight-goal drawn game with Albury Wodonga Warriors in Albury last Saturday. The Warriors dominated the first half after goals in nine minutes from Adam Griffiths and 15 minutes from John Ritchie. Javi Martinez and Paul Brunec did the lead-up work for the first. Brunec's shot was too hot for keeper Pasi Schwalger to hold and Griffiths followed up. Rhys Zolfelds provided the cross for Ritchie's far post header. In the second half the Lions came out firing and Ali Ibrahim put them on the board early in the half. Then in a spell of continuous

Lions' pressure Ibrahim scored again and set up a goal for Robert Dolevski. It took a penalty when Jones was fouled in the box to bring the Warriors level as David Martin converted the kick. But the Lions came back once more and Ibrahim completed his hat-trick. In a last throw sweeper Ryan Hayes came up from the back to find Martin for another equaliser for the Warriors in 84 minutes. Despite some furious late action the score stayed that way till the end.

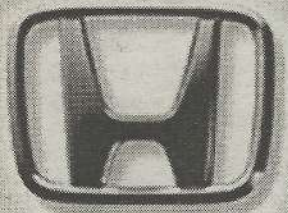
South Dandenong surprised South Melbourne with a 1-0 victory at Bob Jane Stadium last Sunday. It was a classic match plotted by coach Goran Runje as South Dandenong scored early, absorbed lots of South Melbourne pressure then hit on the break. The critical goal came after nine minutes as Mentor Memeti broke down a South Melbourne move in midfield and fed Qemal Korcarevski who finished accurately. Richie Alagich, in a try out after injury, limped off after 20 minutes to be replaced by Ian Callaghan, but the closest South came to a goal in the first half was a Scott Hynds shot saved by Adam Cevizovic after lead up work by Mustafa Mustafa and Tasso Psonis. Andrew Mashoian just could not get a touch on a cross from the bye-line by Boris Ovcin. Mentor Memeti drove a free kick through the South wall but could not beat keeper Chris Roche. The second half saw more resolute South Dandenong defending with Petrit Emini, Lirim Rasimi and Daniel Rajher prominent, but it took a brilliant finger-tip save by Cevizovic in injury time to keep out an Ovcin shot to gain the three points for South Dandenong, which now moves to fifth on the ladder.

The Southern Division has a break now till January 12, 2000 when Round 10 begins on the Wednesday with a match between Fawkner Blues and South Melbourne.

LEADING SCORERS

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|----|
| Anthony Pelikan | Melbourne Knights | 10 |
| Andrew Mashoian | South Melbourne | 9 |
| Ace Stojcevski | Carlton | 7 |
| David Martin | Albury Wodonga | 7 |
| Angelo Motsiopoulos | Carlton | 6 |
| Deniz Ekici | Carlton | 6 |
| Naum Sekulovski | VIS | 6 |
| Xhezair Sulemani | Bulleen Inter | 5 |
| Josip Loncaric | Melbourne Knights | 5 |
| Mark Tsiorlas | VIS | 5 |

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JUNIOR SOCCER

HEADING FOR THE TOP

By Daniel Giorelando

Not many players can say that they have played for a top English football club, but in the case of 16-year-old Mitchell Prentice, he can boast about this proud achievement.

This Wollongong junior has recently returned from a five-week trial with English Premier League side, Middlesbrough under the Big Brother Movement and the experience obtained in the UK can only bolster his ever growing reputation as an up and coming star.

"I learnt alot in the five weeks I was over there. I played two games against Newcastle as well as games against Sheffield Wednesday and Barnsley," Prentice told ABSW.

"Playing for Middlesbrough must be the most memorable time of my life to date.

"I trained with the junior Pro's, that is the under 17 and under 19 teams and played for the club's under 17 team. I also met up with the first team."

Meeting players such as Juninho, Paul Gascoigne and Australia's own Mark Schwarzer during his stay at the club reassured Prentice that he is good enough to make it to the top grade and as his Father Jim explained, given the right attitude, Mitchell is on his way to the top.

"He is a modest kid, with an impressive attitude both on and off the field. He has done well and I know he can secure a future over there. Mum and dad are totally behind him."

Following his visit to the UK, Mitchell is confident about his chances of one day playing for Middlesbrough in the top grade.

"The club said that they will keep in contact with me and they told me to keep in contact with them."

Mitchell has been recently offered a two year scholarship at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra which he will commence soon after the new year.

Being offered the scholarship at the AIS says Prentice is one of his greatest achievements as it will give him the chance to refine his skills before hopefully joining the ever growing list of Aussies playing Abroad.

Prentice has also represented NSW during the Under 16 National titles which were held in Canberra earlier this year, the team finishing second to Victoria.

But it is due to the work of Wollongong Wolves



Mitchell Prentice: Big Future.

under 16 coach, Eddie Tesoro that Mitchell has gotten to where he is. As his father explains, it has now given his son a great stepping stone for the future.

"Mitchell has a lot of respect for Eddie Tesoro, he has developed him to the point where it impressed the selectors and gave him a chance to excel overseas."

And Mitchell fully respects his former coach, stating that Tesoro along with his parents as being the major influences in his life.

But playing professional football is not a life long job and a footballing career can be cut short in a number of ways, therefore a good education is imperative, and these are the same feelings felt by this year 11 student.

"I hope to get a good education so that I have something to fall back on after my footballing career."

But in saying this, Mitchell Prentice has a dream, and if he holds his positive outlook on life both on and off the field, well then this dream will turn into reality sooner rather than later.

"I want to play in the best leagues that I can, get to the highest level and make a good living out of it as well as playing at the highest level."

PROFILE

Full Name: Mitchell James Prentice
DOB: 2/3/83
Foot: Right
Eye Colour: Brown
Hair Colour: Brown
Positions Played: Sweeper, Midfield
Previous Clubs: Wollongong Wolves, Illawarra Association, Figtree Soccer Club, Middlesbrough

Achievements:

Playing for NSW at the National Championships
Receiving a Scholarship for the AIS
Going to England and Middlesbrough FC

Major Ambition: Play for Australia and overseas in the English Premier League



Eric Cantona: Favourite Player.

PERSONALITY

Favourite Actor: Kevin Costner
Favourite Movie: Braveheart
Favourite Comedian: Jim Carey
Favourite Magazine: ABSW
Favourite Food: Spaghetti Bolognaise
Favourite Drink: Coke
Favourite TV Show: English Premier Show

If you were stuck on a deserted island and you could invite six people, who would they be?

Dad, Jim Carey, Jennifer Lopez, Mohammad Ali, Eric Cantona, Bruce Lee.

THE PEERS

Favourite Overseas Player: Eric Cantona
Favourite Overseas Team: Manchester Utd
Most Admired Australian (Based overseas): Harry Kewell
Most Admired Defender: Jaap Stam
Most Admired Midfielder: Clarence Seedorf
Most Admired Striker: Gabriel Batistuta
Most Admired Goalkeeper: Rene Higuita
Major Influences: Parents, Michael Santalab, Eddie Tesoro



Mitchell Prentice: Seen here playing for NSW in the Under 16 National titles. He has just been offered a two-year AIS scholarship.



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FAMOUS PHOTOS



Adelaide City Women's Soccer Club coaching co-ordinator, Fabio DeLuca remembers fondly the holiday he had with his family at Club Med, Tahiti. DeLuca, pictured right (wearing shades) watches as Diego Maradona larks with his wife and his then infant daughter. A former staff coach at English club Millwall, DeLuca was Maradona's tennis partner in the Club Med doubles tournament. He recalls that they finished a creditable third in the event.

Have you had your photo taken with someone famous in soccer? Even if it happened years ago, you can have the photo published in ABSW. Send photos to

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Or E-mail the photo in JPEG format to

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STUMP THE EDITOR

QUESTION from:

Dimitri Peppas
Pasadena, S.A.

Who were the first people to invent and play football (soccer)?

Dimitri, all major civilisations have records of football games in their history. There is no surviving evidence but it is believed the game was first played in China 5000 years ago in the time of the yellow emperor.

The most complete records survived are part of the Chinese Han Dynasty (now Hanang province) some 2000 years ago.

The most complete record is in 83BC and depicts the life of Ju Chong. He was a magistrate of the Han Dynasty who was proud of his football skills. He is officially recorded as the World's first footballer.

QUESTION from:

Adrian D'Aloia
Athelstone, S.A.

Bologna of Italy won the Italian Championship two seasons in succession in 1935-36 and 1936-37. Who was Bologna's coach during these two championships?

Adrian, Bologna's coach was Arpad Weisz of Hungary. Unofficially Bologna was the "Team that won the World Treble" because they won two Mitropa Cups also during that period. They were the only Italian team to win the Mitropa Cup when it was a defacto club championship for central European teams.

QUESTION from:

Ali Al-Samail
Auburn, NSW

In 1950, the World Cup Finals' deciding match was won 2-1 by Uruguay. Who scored their goals?

In front of a world record 205 000 crowd at the Maracana stadium Juan Alberto Schiaffino scored Uruguay's equaliser with Alcides Ghiggia grabbing the winner with minutes to go.

THIS WEEKS

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SOCCER WOMAN

By Janene Mar

THE MATILDAS: OZ CUP 2000

A FORM GUIDE

The 2nd Australia Cup kicks off the Olympic year of 2000 with a bang, the greatest collection of women's football nations to Australian shores to date, and yet just the start of what will be an extravaganza of international football over the next nine months.

With a short time to go before the Olympic Games, now the serious stuff begins for the competing nations, three of whom line up in this 4-nation Australia Cup - Australia, current World Cup and Olympic champions USA, and Sweden. The unknown Czech Republic makes up the field.

AUSTRALIA

More often than not, the Matildas need to travel overseas to get the quality competition necessary (with the exception of this Olympic year), yet their record at home when they have the opportunity to host internationals is quite remarkable.

The Matildas claimed the 1st Australia Cup last January, defeating the talented Italian side 1-0 in the Bruce Stadium final.

In late November 1997, the Matildas recorded their best ever result with a 2-1 win over Olympic silver medallists China in the final of the Tri-Nations Series. February that same year was the last (and first) time the mighty Americans played in Australia, and with a young and inexperienced lineup, the Matildas were not disgraced, going down 4-0, 3-1, and 3-0.

MAJORS RECORD

Finished a disappointing 11th at the 1999 World Cup in the 16 nation field, and 12th at the 12-nation 1995 World Cup. Did not qualify for the 1991 World Cup or the 1996 Olympic Games.

COACH

The Matildas are led by new National Coach Chris Tanzey, in the job since September following the resignation of Greg Brown.

SELECTIONS

Within their full-time training environment at the AIS, competition for selection into any team is fierce. Each player under close scrutiny every single training session.

PREPARATION

Training an intensive six days per week, the Matildas have clearly improved in fitness since September. Match practice is gained through two training games per week against State boys' teams and a quality Over 35s men's combination. A short way into learning a new philosophy of play under coach Tanzey, the Matildas focus more on possession, concentration, and movement on and off the ball.

SINCE THE WORLD CUP

With the disappointment of their 11th placing at



Chris Tanzey: New coach looking for glory.

the World Cup now finally well behind them, the Matildas have been working harder than ever on improving their game. Their only internationals have been two against the World Cup runners-up on an unexpected tour to China in late October, performing encouragingly well despite the 3-1 and 4-2 losses.

HEAD TO HEAD

Have never beaten the pedigree USA outfit and hold a win-draw-loss record of 0-0-12 to the number one team in the world. Their last meeting ended in a 4-0 scoreline in a pre-World Cup friendly in June this year. Australia's best effort against USA was two 2-1 losses in July 1996, just before they won the Atlanta Olympics. Our worst result was an embarrassing 9-1 loss in June 1997.

The Matildas had beaten the experienced Sweden in their previous two clashes entering this year's World Cup, but in the one that mattered at USA '99, it was Sweden who came away with a convincing 3-1 win. The all-time w-d-l record is 2-0-2.

Australia has never played the Czech Republic.

USA (in Aust).

More often than not, the Matildas need to travel overseas to get the quality competition necessary (with the exception of this Olympic year), yet their record at home when they have the opportunity to host internationals is quite remarkable.

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USA (IN AUSTRALIA)

Previously played in Australia in February/March 1997 in the Ram Sports Cup, a three-test series. Made the clean sweep with a 4-0, 3-1 and 3-0 win record. With their obvious drawing power, plus playing host to both the 1996 Olympic Games and the 1999 World Cup, play relatively few of their many internationals outside the US.

MAJORS RECORD

The most successful team in world football as Champions of both the 1991 and 1999 World Cups, and 1996 Olympic Games gold medallists. Finished 3rd in the 1995 World Cup.

COACH

Highly successful National Coach Tony Di Cicco resigned in November, and his replacement is yet to be appointed. Long-time Assistant Coach Lauren Gregg is up against several male coaches. It will be interesting to see if this delayed appointment has an effect on the team with the Olympics drawing ever

closer.

SELECTIONS

Under a new coach, and with large player depth in their ranks, it's hard to say how close the Americans' Australia Cup lineup will resemble their World Cup side.

PREPARATION

Apart from their US Women's Cup commitments, the remainder of their time has been consumed by a heavy schedule of promotional activities around the nation. Nineteen of the 20 World Cup champions have also competed in the Victory Tour, a 12-city indoor series, a game very different to regular football.

SINCE THE WORLD CUP

Since their historic win at home to claim their second World Cup title, have played just three internationals in the annual US Women's Cup in early October. Comfortably won the title with easy wins over South Korea, Finland, and a 4-2 victory over Brazil.

HEAD TO HEAD

Have never faltered against Australia with a win-draw-loss record of 12-0-0, all but one of these matches played since 1995.

USA's last clash with Sweden was a 1-1 draw at the Algarve Cup in March this year. The all-time w-d-l record stands in the US' favour at 9-2-1.

The USA have never before played the Czech Republic.

SWEDEN (in Aust).

January will be Sweden's first ever visit to Australia. The 1991 tour of champion Swedish club Malmö for a series of matches against Australia is their closest previous connection to the land down under.

MAJORS RECORD

Have always been near the top of international rankings with a 3rd place finish at the 1991 World Cup, 5th place at the 1995 World Cup, and 7th at the 1999 World Cup. Claimed 6th place at the 1996 Olympics.

COACH

Marika Domanski Lyfors has held Sweden's National Coach position since 1996 after the Olympic Games, successfully rebuilding the team following the retirement of legends Pia Sundhage and Lena Videkull. She is one of the world's first female national coaches.

SELECTIONS

Expected to bring the core of the successful World

Cup team.

PREPARATION

Working hard towards the Olympic Games after qualification as the 7th placed team at the World Cup.

SINCE THE WORLD CUP

Been competing in the UEFA Qualifiers with two matches to date, a 2-2 draw against France in late September, and a 5-2 win over Spain in early November. Currently in second place with a game in hand behind France. Holland is the other team in Group One.

HEAD TO HEAD

Have a 2-0-2 record against Australia, and have the psychological edge after all but wiping the Matildas out of the recent World Cup with a comfortable 3-1 win.

Have once beaten the Americans although this was way back in 1987, but have since drawn twice for an all-time record of 1-2-9.

DONT MISS THE ACTION

2ND AUSTRALIA CUP

Fri 7 January Australia v Sweden 6pm North Sydney Oval Sydney (doubleheader with Northern Spirit match)

Friday 7 January USA v Czech Republic 6pm Olympic Park, Melbourne (doubleheader with Carlton match)

Mon 10 January USA v Sweden 5.30pm Bob Jane Stadium Melbourne Australia v Czech Republic 7.30pm Bob Jane Stadium, Melbourne

Thu 13 January Sweden v Czech Republic 5.30pm Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide Australia v USA 7.30pm Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide

Tickets are available through Northern Spirit (Sydney); Carlton and the Victorian Soccer Federation (Melbourne); and Venuetix (Adelaide).

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic have never qualified for a major world tournament and are very much an unknown team, especially to Australia and the USA. The Czechs are currently competing in the UEFA Qualifiers in Group Six alongside Scotland, Ireland, and Croatia. Their most recent result is a 2-1 loss to Scotland away. Eastern Europe has not traditionally been strong in women's football, but the

fantastic 8th place finish of Russia at the recent World Cup and the strong challenge of Ukraine to reach the World Cup playoff stages bears a good sign for the future.

The Czechs themselves appear to be building for the future with their strong showing in the current UEFA U18 Championship, having made the third round alongside Denmark, Germany, and Finland.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

CHELSEA 0 LEEDS 2

Leeds returned to the top while Chelsea's title hopes virtually disappeared. Goals by midfielder Stephen McPhail after 66 and 87 minutes secured victory.

Chelsea's cause was not helped by the 68th minute sending-off of French defender Franck Leboeuf for a petulant foul on Harry Kewell.

ARSENAL 1 WIMBLEDON 1

Carl Cort put Wimbledon ahead after seven minutes against high-flying Arsenal who looked strangely out-of-sorts against their south London rivals.

Frenchman Thierry Henry equalised for the home side after 61 minutes but could not stop them slipping back a place in the chase for the title.

ASTON VILLA 2 SHEFF WED 1

Villa had two penalties saved by Pavel Srnicek – just three days after losing on penalties to West Ham in the League Cup – but still managed the win.

Dion Dublin and Paul Merson failed from their spot-kicks, but Belgian international Gilles de Bilde scored with a 20th minute penalty to put Sheffield Wednesday ahead.

Villa, without a league win for nine matches, finally scored when Merson curled in a shot after 69 minutes before Ian Taylor netted a diving header to end their dismal run.

BRADFORD 2 NEWCASTLE 0

Bradford defended with 10 men behind the ball for most of the match and looked to catch Newcastle on the break and the tactic worked after 56 minutes when Dean Saunders scored.

David Wetherall made sure of the points with a 71st minute goal.

LEICESTER 0 DERBY 1

Third-from-bottom Derby County, who had lost their last four league matches, won with a strange goal from Darryl Powell who hit a high hopeful ball towards goal from the edge of the box.

Under pressure, former England keeper Tim Flowers missed his punch and the ball ended in the back of the net. It was Powell's first goal for three years and Derby's first league win since October 30.

LIVERPOOL 2 COVENTRY 0

Michael Owen scored his first home league goal since February on the stroke of halftime and Titi Camara added a blistering second after 74 minutes as Liverpool marked the 40th anniversary of Bill

Shankly's arrival at the club in 1959 with their fifth successive home league win.

BORO 2 TOTTENHAM 1

Ramon Vega, with his first goal of the season, headed Tottenham ahead after seven minutes, but injury-hit Middlesbrough, playing without Paul Ince and former Spur Paul Gascoigne among others, equalised after 34 minutes when German international Christian Ziege beat Ian Walker with a left-foot shot.

Brian Deane scored the winner after 67 minutes with a close range shot for his 150th league goal of his career. An afternoon that began so well for Spurs ended on a low note when Allan Nielsen was sent off in injury time.

SUNDERLAND 2 SOUTHAMPTON 0

Kevin Phillips scored his 18th goal of the season after 30 minutes and his 19th in injury time to give Sunderland victory and lift them into third spot. Phillips also missed a second half penalty but they held on to the three points while Southampton have now failed to score in the past four league matches.

WATFORD 1 EVERTON 3

Everton ended a nine match winless run with their success at Watford who have now gone 10 league matches without a win. Nick Barmby put Everton ahead after four minutes with Don Hutchison doubling the lead after 37.

Michel Ngonge pulled one back for Watford with a great shot after 62 minutes but Everton made it 3-1 with a David Unsworth penalty four minutes from time. Watford's Neil Cox was sent off in the final minute.

WEST HAM 2 MAN UTD 4

Manchester United raced into a 3-0 lead after only 19 minutes with two goals from Ryan Giggs and a Dwight Yorke header – the 100th goal of his league career.

But West Ham never gave up and pulled one back from Paolo Di Canio after 23 minutes and he scored a second after 52 minutes to make it 2-3.

The match turned United's way midway through the second half when Di Canio had a great chance to equalise and spurned it and seconds later Yorke made it 4-2. Substitute Nicky Butt appeared to add a fifth in the 85th minute but the goal was disallowed as West Ham lost at home for the first time this season.

SERIE A (ITALY)



Stephen McPhail: Celebrates his opening goal against Chelsea.

CAGLIARI 0 LECCE 0

Last Wednesday's Italian Cup victory at Parma failed to improve Cagliari's league form and they remain firmly rooted to the bottom of the table, without a win all season.

French striker Jason Maye had a strong appeal for a first-half penalty turned down but it took a reflex save by Alessio Scarpì from Claudio Bonomi to deny Lecce their first win in Sardinia in 12 years.

FIorentina 1 JUVENTUS 1

Gabriel Batistuta took some of the momentum out of Juventus's title challenge with a superb 20th minute equaliser after Croatian defender Igor Tudor had given the visitors a 17th minute lead with a towering header.

Juventus, who dominated the first-half, lived dangerously in the second once Zinedine Zidane hobbled off. Only a superb reflex save from Enrico Chiesa's diving header by Michelangelo Rampulla in the 80th minute saved the visitors from defeat.

LAZIO 2 PIACENZA 0

Lazio made sure of entering the New Year as league leaders with their sixth win over Piacenza in seven meetings at the Olympic stadium.

Chilean Marcelo Salas took just nine minutes to open the scoring with his seventh of the season. Yugoslav defender Sinisa Mihajlovic, who made the first, added the second himself in the 59th. The visitors finished the match with 10-men after Daniele Delli Carri was sent off in the 58th minute.

AC MILAN 2 REGGINA 2

Serie A newcomers Reggina followed-up September's draw at Juventus by taking a point off the Serie A champions thanks to a last minute penalty save by debutant goalkeeper Emanuele Belardi from Andriy Shevchenko.

Italy Under-21 international Andrea Pirlo put the visitors ahead in the 29th minute before Ukrainian Shevchenko turned the match round with two quick goals in the 61st and 74th minutes.

But, in the 78th, Milan's Federico Giunti was dismissed for a late tackle and from the resultant free-kick, Mohamed Kallon Leone levelled the scores.

PARMA 2 AS ROMA 0

First-half goals from Hernan Crespo and defender Stefano Torrisi gave Parma their first win in five years over Roma at a mud-heap of a pitch at the Tardini stadium. The result allowed the home side to

leapfrog over the visitors into third-place.

Roma rarely looked like avoiding their second successive defeat although Francesco Totti did hit the bar with a 25-metre shot midway through the first-half and Parma's French defender Lilian Thuram appeared to pull down Marco Delvecchio inside the area late in the second.

PERUGIA 3 BOLOGNA 2

Veteran manager Carlo Mazzone gained revenge over Bologna, the club which fired him last summer despite narrowly failing to reach the UEFA Cup final.

Alessandro Calori (33) and ex-Juventus striker Nicola Amoruso (60) twice put the home side ahead only for Pierre Wome (50) and then Giuseppe Signori (65) to level the scores. But, with nine minutes remaining, Amoruso hit the post and Roberto Ripa turned in the rebound for the decider. Bologna defender Giovanni Bia was sent off two minutes later for dissent.

TORINO 0 UDINESE 1

Dane Martin Jorgensen's 27th minute header brought Udinese their first win at Torino in 15 years. The home side missed several chances to equalise through Yugoslav Ilija Ivic and Fabio Galante but the dismissal of striker Edoardo Artistic in the 86th minute killed off Torino's hopes of avoiding their fourth successive defeat.

BARI 2 INTER MILAN 1

Brilliant solo goals from teenagers Antonio Cassano and Hugo Enyinnaya condemned Inter to their second successive league defeat. Nigerian Hugo Enyinnaya, 18, put the home side ahead in the seventh minute with a 30-metre shot that caught Angelo Peruzzi off his line.

Christian Vieri levelled in the 12th but Inter never mastered Bari's dangerous counter-attacks. The match looked destined for a draw until the 88th minute, when 17-year-old Cassano raced 30-metres, dribbled between two defenders and beat Peruzzi. It was Bari's sixth win in seven matches against Inter.

VERONA 1 VENEZIA 0

Brazilian Adailton lifted Verona out of the relegation zone with his fourth goal in three matches. The Brazilian converted a penalty in the 57th minute after Alfredo Aglietti was brought down in the area.



Andriy Shevchenko covers his head after missing a decisive penalty as Reggina's Simone Giacchetta rejoices over him. The game ended 2-2.



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



GROUP A

Porto (Portugal)
Hertha Berlin (Germany)
Barcelona (Spain)
Sparta Prague (Czech Republic)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

| | | | |
|---------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Hertha Berlin | 1 | Barcelona | 1 |
| Michalke 33 | | Luis Enrique 14 | |
| Sparta Prague | 0 | Porto | 2 |
| | | Drulovic 77, Jardel 84 | |

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|---------------|---|
| Porto | 1 | Hertha Berlin | 0 |
| Drulovic 78 | | | |
| Barcelona | 5 | Sparta Prague | 0 |
| Kluivert 44, 63 | | | |
| Luis Enrique 45, 76 | | | |
| Guardiola 59 | | | |

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

| | | |
|---------------|---|---------------|
| Barcelona | v | Porto |
| Hertha Berlin | v | Sparta Prague |

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

| | | |
|---------------|---|---------------|
| Porto | v | Barcelona |
| Sparta Prague | v | Hertha Berlin |

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

| | | |
|-----------|---|---------------|
| Barcelona | v | Hertha Berlin |
| Porto | v | Sparta Prague |

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

| | | |
|---------------|---|-----------|
| Hertha Berlin | v | Porto |
| Sparta Prague | v | Barcelona |

Table

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Porto | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| Barcelona | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| Hertha Berlin | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Sparta Prague | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 0 |

GROUP B

Bordeaux (France)
Fiorentina (Italy)
Manchester United (England)
Valencia (Spain)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Fiorentina | 2 | Manchester Utd | 0 |
| Batistuta 25, Balbo 52 | | | |
| Valencia | 3 | Bordeaux | 0 |
| Farinos 60, Ilie 66, Gonzalez 88 | | | |

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------|---|
| Bordeaux | 0 | Fiorentina | 0 |
| Manchester Utd | 3 | Valencia | 0 |
| Keane 38, Solskjaer 47 | | | |
| Scholes 69 | | | |

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

| | | |
|----------------|---|----------|
| Manchester Utd | v | Bordeaux |
| Fiorentina | v | Valencia |

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

| | | |
|----------|---|----------------|
| Bordeaux | v | Manchester Utd |
| Valencia | v | Fiorentina |

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

| | | |
|----------------|---|------------|
| Manchester Utd | v | Fiorentina |
| Bordeaux | v | Valencia |

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

| | | |
|------------|---|----------------|
| Fiorentina | v | Bordeaux |
| Valencia | v | Manchester Utd |

Table

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fiorentina | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Manchester Utd | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Valencia | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Bordeaux | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 |

GROUP C

Bayern Munich (Germany)
Dynamo Kiev (Ukraine)
Real Madrid (Spain)
Rosenborg Trondheim (Norway)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

| | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| Dynamo Kiev | 1 | Real Madrid | 2 |
| Rebrov 85pen | | Morientes 17, Raul 48 | |
| Rosenborg | 1 | Bayern Munich | 1 |
| Skammelsrud 47 | | Jancker 10 | |

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|-------------|---|
| Bayern Munich | 2 | Dynamo Kiev | 1 |
| Jancker 6, Sergio 80 | | Rebrov 50 | |
| Real Madrid | 3 | Rosenborg | 1 |
| Raul 17, Savio 85 | | Carew 47 | |
| Carlos 90 | | | |

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 29

| | | |
|-------------|---|---------------|
| Real Madrid | v | Bayern Munich |
| Dynamo Kiev | v | Rosenborg |

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

| | | |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| Bayern Munich | v | Real Madrid |
| Rosenborg | v | Dynamo Kiev |

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

| | | |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| Real Madrid | v | Dynamo Kiev |
| Bayern Munich | v | Rosenborg |

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

| | | |
|-------------|---|---------------|
| Dynamo Kiev | v | Bayern Munich |
| Rosenborg | v | Real Madrid |

Table

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Real Madrid | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 6 |
| Bayern Munich | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Rosenborg | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Dynamo Kiev | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 |

GROUP D

Feyenoord (Netherlands)
Olympique Marseille (France)
Lazio (Italy)
Chelsea (England)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| Marseille | 0 | Lazio | 2 |
| | | Stankovic 64, Conceicao 78 | |
| Chelsea | 3 | Feyenoord | 1 |
| Babayaro 45 | | Julio Cruz 90 | |
| Tore Flo 67, 86 | | | |

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

| | | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|---|
| Feyenoord | 3 | Marseille | 0 |
| Cruz 72, 90 | | | |
| Bosvelt 83 | | | |
| Lazio | 0 | Chelsea | 0 |

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 29

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|
| Lazio | v | Feyenoord |
| Marseille | v | Chelsea |

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|
| Feyenoord | v | Lazio |
| Chelsea | v | Marseille |

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|
| Lazio | v | Marseille |
| Feyenoord | v | Chelsea |

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|
| Marseille | v | Feyenoord |
| Chelsea | v | Lazio |

Table

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chelsea | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Lazio | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Feyenoord | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Marseille | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 |

SUPER LEAGUE THREAT TO CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Media Partners, the company behind the failed bid to launch a European Super League, said last week they were ready to launch another attempt to set up a privately-run elite soccer competition.

Rodolfo Hecht, president of the Milan-based sports marketing group, said he was awaiting a ruling from the European Union before taking action.

Media Partners filed a complaint with the European Commission in October last year claiming that UEFA, European soccer's governing body which runs the two major European club competitions, had infringed EU competition rules by preventing them from organising a

new Super League.

"We are waiting for the ruling from Brussels and when we get it we will go back to the field," said Hecht.

Hecht said he expects a ruling from the EU in "early 2000" and that he was confident of a decision in his favour. "You can't tell people they can't play football," he said.

Media Partners held talks with leading clubs including AC Milan and Manchester United in 1998 as they

sought to build support for a breakaway league.

FIFA threatened national associations, clubs and players with suspension if they linked up with the proposed Super League.

UEFA finally killed the plan by expanding their premier competition, the Champions League, offering clubs a greater slice of television and sponsorship revenue, and upping prize money.

Although the clubs eventually united

behind the UEFA banner there have still been noises of discontent.

In October Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz, the secretary and de facto leader of the so-called G-14 group of elite clubs, said he was unhappy with the division of television income from the Champions League.

"UEFA are playing around with us and we are not disposed to let them do it," Sanz told Spanish sports daily Marca.

A month earlier AC Milan president Silvio Berlusconi, a long time supporter of a European Super League, said the current Champions League was "only a transitional formula until we arrive at a real and proper European league".

QUARTER FINALS

FIRST LEG — April 5
SECOND LEG — April 19

SEMI-FINALS

FIRST LEG — May 3
SECOND LEG — May 10

FINAL

Wednesday, May 24
At Stade de France



FIFA

World Rankings

(Valid until December 22)

| | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|------|--------------------|------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Brazil | 69 | Costa Rica | 136 | St Kitts & Nevis |
| 2 | France | 70 | Burkina Faso | 138 | Libya |
| 3 | Czech Republic | 71 | Guatemala | 139 | Benin |
| 4 | Spain | 72 | Mali | 140 | St Vincent/Gr |
| 5 | Germany | 73 | Estonia | 141 | Ethiopia |
| 6 | Croatia | 74 | Bosnia-Herzegovina | 142 | Solomon Islands |
| 7= | Argentina | 75 | Gabon | 143 | Panama |
| 7= | Norway | 76 | Cuba | 144= | Andorra |
| 9 | Romania | 77 | Honduras | 144= | San Marino |
| 10 | Mexico | 78 | Iraq | 144= | Sri Lanka |
| 11 | England | 79 | Uzbekistan | 147= | Dominica |
| 12 | Italy | 80= | Northern Ireland | 147= | Saint Lucia |
| 13 | Yugoslavia | 80= | Canada | 149 | Antigua & Barbuda |
| 14 | Denmark | 82 | Nigeria | 150 | Maldives |
| 15 | Portugal | 82 | Senegal | 151 | Lesotho |
| 16 | Sweden | 84 | Namibia | 152 | Gambia |
| 17 | Netherlands | 85 | AUSTRALIA | 153 | Laos |
| 18 | Paraguay | 86 | Albania | 154 | Dominican Republic |
| 19 | Russia | 87 | Armenia | 155 | Nepal |
| 20 | Slovakia | 87 | Algeria | 156 | Yemen |
| 21 | United States | 89 | Togo | 157 | Cayman Islands |
| 22 | Chile | 90 | Guinea | 158 | Mauritania |
| 23 | Scotland | 91= | Oman | 159= | Rwanda |
| 24= | Morocco | 91= | Qatar | 159= | Kyrgyzstan |
| 24= | Colombia | 93 | Moldova | 161 | Niger |
| 26= | Israel | 93 | Wales | 162 | Surinam |
| 26= | Austria | 95 | El Salvador | 163 | British Virgin Is. |
| 28 | Ukraine | 96 | Belarus | 164 | Bermuda |
| 29 | Tunisia | 97 | Indonesia | 165 | Botswana |
| 30 | Belgium | 98 | Azerbaijan | 166 | Korea DPR |
| 31 | South Africa | 99 | Mozambique | 167 | Netherlands Antilles |
| 32 | Poland | 100 | Haiti | 168 | Eritrea |
| 33 | Turkey | 101 | New Zealand | 169 | Palestine |
| 34 | Greece | 102 | Congo | 170 | Cambodia |
| 35 | Zambia | 103 | Kenya | 171 | Guyana |
| 36 | Republic of Ireland | 104 | Singapore | 172 | Guinea-Bissau |
| 37 | Bulgaria | 104 | Liberia | 173 | Chinese Taipei |
| 38 | Egypt | 106 | Vietnam | 174 | Macao |
| 39 | Saudi Arabia | 107 | Syria | 175 | Cape Verde Is |
| 40 | Trinidad & Tobago | 108 | Uganda | 176 | Tonga |
| 41 | Korea Republic | 109= | Lebanon | 177 | Samoa |
| 42 | Uruguay | 109= | India | 178 | Philippines |
| 43= | Slovenia | 111 | Venezuela | 179 | Pakistan |
| 43= | Jamaica | 112 | Faroe Islands | 180= | Cook Islands |
| 45 | Peru | 113 | Malawi | 180= | Papua New Guinea |
| 46 | Iran | 114 | Barbados | 180= | Chad |
| 47 | Hungary | 115 | Jordan | 183 | Vanuatu |
| 48 | Iceland | 116 | Malaysia | 184 | Puerto Rico |
| 49 | Switzerland | 117 | Tajikistan | 185 | Brunei Darussalam |
| 50 | Lithuania | 118 | Kazakhstan | 186 | Bahamas |
| 51 | Ivory Coast | 119 | Mauritius | 187= | Belize |
| 52 | Japan | 120 | Malta | 187= | Aruba |
| 53 | Angola | 121 | Sierra Leone | 189 | Seychelles |
| 54 | Finland | 122 | Turkmenistan | 190 | Nicaragua |
| 55 | Ghana | 123 | Grenada | 191 | Central African Rep. |
| 55 | Cameroon | 124 | Luxembourg | 192 | US Virgin Islands |
| 57 | Bolivia | 125 | Hong Kong | 193= | Equatorial Guinea |
| 58 | Cyprus | 126 | Tanzania | 193= | Djibouti |
| 59 | Congo DR (Zaire) | 127 | Myanmar | 195 | Turks and Caicos Islands |
| 60 | China PR | 128= | Liechtenstein | 196 | Sao Tome e Principe |
| 61 | Latvia | 128= | Sudan | 197 | Somalia |
| 62 | Ecuador | 130 | Swaziland | 198= | Mongolia |
| 63 | Thailand | 131 | Burundi | 198= | American Samoa |
| 64 | FYR Macedonia | 132 | Fiji | 200 | Guam |
| 65 | Georgia | 133 | Bahrain | 201= | Montserrat |
| 66 | UAE | 134 | Madagascar | 201= | Anguilla |
| 67 | Kuwait | 135 | Bangladesh | | |
| 68 | Zimbabwe | 136 | Tahiti | | |

Note: Teams inactive since 1991 and teams which have not played yet do not appear in the table.



AC MILAN LAUNCH TV STATION

Italian champions AC Milan will launch their own television channel in January, the club announced last week.

"Milan Channel" will be a subscription channel on the Tele Piu satellite television network and will be the first club channel in Italy when it begins broadcasting on January 16.

"It offers us a great instrument for communication and a great commercial opportunity," said Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani.

Tele Piu, the Italian unit of France's pay-television company Canal



Plus, already broadcast Milan home games as part of their football coverage.

"Milan Channel" will offer news, interviews, archive footage of games as well as highlights of

Serie A matches and youth team games, said Galliani.

The channel will be jointly managed by AC Milan and the Milan-based company Media Partners.

European Champions Manchester United, Spanish giants Real Madrid and France's Olympic Marseille already have their own subscription channels.

AJAX CHAIRMAN REGRETS COMMENTS

Ajax Amsterdam's Chairman Michael van Praag regrets having called former Ajax star Patrick Kluivert a "freeloader," the club said last week.

In an interview in the "Jewish Journal Magazine," a publication not normally attracting much attention among sports fans, Van Praag said Kluivert had been idling during his last two seasons with Ajax before moving to Spain.

"I still think that's a disgrace. I think he's simply a freeloader," he was quoted as saying.

"Mr Kluivert's thoughts were probably already abroad at that time," Van Praag added.

The Ajax chairman said he did not

share the general view that Kluivert was an outstanding striker.

"He had incredible luck scoring that one goal in the Champions League final that was won by Ajax against Milan," Van Praag said, referring to Ajax's 1-0 triumph over AC Milan in the 1995 European Cup Final.

"Michael van Praag was making his remarks about the present Barcelona player as a private person and looking back, he thinks it would have been wiser not to have given his opinion on Kluivert in public," Ajax said in a brief statement.

It added Van Praag was not available for further comment, but did not say whether the chairman had withdrawn his scathing remarks.



Patrick Kluivert: "Free loader."

KLINSMANN OUT OF RETIREMENT

Retired German international Juergen Klinsmann will join a Macau XI for a match to mark the Portuguese enclave's handover to China on December 23.

The 33-year-old former Inter Milan and Tottenham Hotspur striker, who played his farewell match in May, will join Italy's Franco Baresi and Brazilian World Cup winning captain Carlos Dunga against the Chinese national team.

"It'll be nice to be on the same pitch as Dunga and Baresi and not get kicked by them," said Klinsmann. "It'll be a pleasure playing with those two guys, they're both legends on the international stage."

"Franco and I played against each other in several Milan derbies when I was with Inter and we played several times for Germany and Italy internationally. Dunga played for my old club VfB Stuttgart. They liked him a lot. They still admire him in my hometown. It's great for the game that Dunga and Baresi are still involved in football."

Klinsmann, who retired from the inter-



Juergen Klinsmann: Putting on the boots again.

national scene after the France 98 World Cup when the Germans were knocked out of the tournament at the quarter-final stage by Croatia, said he gave up football to spend more time with his young son.

"I miss the game but not the business," said Klinsmann, who now lives in California. "I would love to play the game every day but I don't miss the environment; there are many other aspects of the game apart from training and playing."

"I'm keeping fit. I work out with the Los Angeles Galaxy MLS team once in a while and I have a couple of friends who I meet a couple of times a week for a kick around. I work out every day. I'm fit for life but not fit for professional football."

Since quitting, Klinsmann, who during his time in England was known as one of the most articulate and intelligent players in the premier league, has immersed himself in education in his new home on America's west coast.

"I'm studying English, Spanish and computing," he said. "In California you're surrounded by both languages. I have my own schedule now, working on a couple of projects but mainly it gives me a lot of time with my family."

"Playing in Europe you're on an 11-month schedule. I could have played for another year but I wanted to be around my son Jonathon. He's two-and-a-half now and I wanted to play with him and see him grow up. If I had carried on playing I wouldn't have got that time with him back."



WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR



Rivaldo: Number One.



Rivaldo



Brazilian international forward Rivaldo of Barcelona has been voted World Player of the Year by readers of World Soccer magazine.

He finished the overwhelming winner of the poll, collecting 42.27 percent of the votes. Manchester United's England international midfielder David Beckham was second (26.55 percent) followed by Ukraine striker Andriy Shevchenko of AC Milan (9.02 percent).

None of the players who finished in the top three last year — winner Zinedine Zidane, Michael Owen or Ronaldo — managed to get into the top 10 this year.

Manchester United were voted World Team of the Year following their triumphs in winning the European Cup, the English Premier League and the F.A. Cup, with their manager Alex Ferguson voted World Manager of the

Year. The World Soccer award began in 1982 and Rivaldo is the third Brazilian to win the honour following Zico (1983) and Ronaldo (1996 and 1997).

Rivaldo is expected to be named European Player of the Year in the poll organised by France Football magazine this week.

TEAM OF THE YEAR: MAN. UNITED



BECKHAM TO PLAY ABROAD

Manchester United and England midfielder David Beckham would like to play for an overseas club eventually and should be paid more money, his wife Victoria "Posh Spice" Adams says.

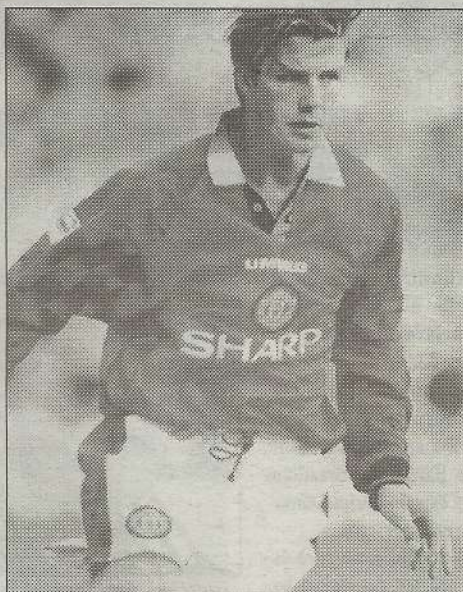
Saturday newspapers quoted the pop star as saying in an interview with BBC Radio One that Beckham was unlikely to see out his career at the European champions.

"At some point he will move and I think playing abroad is something he'd like to do," she said.

"At the moment David is happy up there and I'm happy. But I'm travelling between London and Manchester. At some point he will move. But not right at the moment."

Adams, hugely wealthy in her own right as a member of the Spice Girls group, was also asked about the recent 50,000 pounds (\$80,630) a week pay deal agreed by Manchester United captain Roy Keane.

"I don't know what kind of difference that will make but David's money should go up," she said.



David Beckham: Could leave Man. Utd.

KANU GETS FINAL OFFER

Arsenal have told African Player of the Year Nwankwo Kanu to accept their final pay offer or leave the English Premier League club.

Arsenal chairman Peter Hill-Wood said the club had made the Nigerian a "fabulous, generous offer".

"It is also the last one. Most definitely it is the last one. Kanu is under contract and we definitely want him to stay," he was quoted as saying.

"But if he finds our offer is not good enough then he will have to quit and try and find it somewhere else. He will certainly not be getting the kind of money he wants at Arsenal."

The 23-year-old Kanu joined Arsenal last January from Inter Milan, where he had been diagnosed and operated on for a life-threatening heart ailment, and has since been a revelation in England.

Kanu had been offered around 20,000 pounds (\$32,250) a week, a rise of 8,000 pounds (\$12,900).

However, the player's advisers wanted 35,000 pounds (\$56,440) a week.

That would make him the highest paid player at a club that includes players such as Dutch internationals Dennis Bergkamp and Marc Overmars.

Manchester United agreed this month to pay their captain Roy Keane a reported 50,000 pounds



Nwankwo Kanu: More money.

(\$80,630) a week, making him the highest paid player in the Premier League.

HAMMERS IN CUP TROUBLE

West Ham United's place in the English League Cup semifinals has been stripped after the Football League said the club had fielded an ineligible player in their quarter-final victory over Aston Villa.

Nigeria-born England schoolboy international Emmanuel Omoyinmi came on as a substitute near the end of last week's match which West Ham won in a penalty shoot-out.

But the wing-back was cup-tied, having played for



second division Gillingham in the second round.

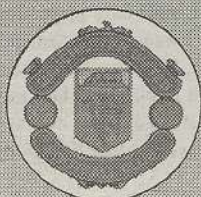
Football League spokesman John Nagle said last week: "He played for Gillingham while on loan there."

"He then played for West Ham as a substitute which contravenes the rules of the competition."

"We are now looking into it and speaking to the clubs involved."

The tie will now be replayed at Villa Park with free gate entry for the match.

WIN MAN. UNITED VIDEO



SEE PAGE 7 FOR DETAILS



BAGGIO TO LEAVE INTER

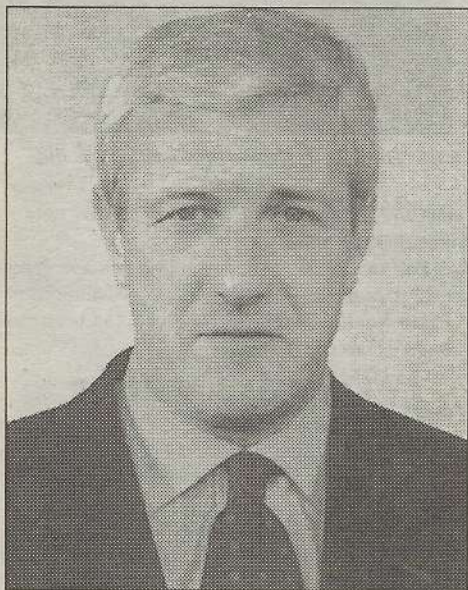
Roberto Baggio's future was thrown into doubt last week when Inter Milan coach Marcello Lippi said Baggio could leave the club after he was publicly criticised by the player.

Baggio said in an interview that Lippi had gone back on his word by leaving him on the bench for most of this season after having promising him a key role.

"If a player is not happy with the fact that the trainer has to make certain choices, regardless of whether he likes or dislikes someone, then he can go somewhere else," Lippi told reporters at Inter's training camp.

In a swift and strong response to Baggio's comments, Inter's technical director Gabriele Orioli also said Baggio was free to leave.

"Players play on merit at Inter, that applies to everyone and it applies to Baggio as well as the others."



Marcello Lippi: Says Baggio is free to leave.

Whoever doesn't agree can leave," said Orioli. In the interview Baggio said he would have left Inter in the summer had he known how little first team soccer he would play this year.

He accused Lippi of being less honest with him than his former coach at AC Milan Fabio Capello.

"When Lippi arrived at Inter he said he wanted to talk to me and during that conversation he told me I'd be in the first team because he considered me an important player," Baggio said.

"I went on holiday to Argentina convinced I would have a role to play this season. However, things have changed..."

"I just want to say that if I had known from the start I was to spend so much time on the bench I would have accepted one of the many offers I had," he said.

Baggio has made only five appearances for Inter since Lippi arrived in the close season — all of them as a second-half substitute.

His frustration is a reminder of two unhappy seasons he spent at AC Milan between 1995-97 when he was still considered one of the world's greatest players but could not hold down a place in Capello's first team.

"The same thing happened when Capello returned to Milan,"

Baggio recalled, "But with a great deal of honesty, Capello made me understand that I didn't figure in the club's plans."

"After the discussion with Lippi I was still enthusiastic but now I realise he hasn't kept his promises and therefore I can't say I have the same enthusiasm I had in the summer."

Baggio said he did not want to leave Inter at the moment for personal reasons but, asked where he would go next summer, he said: "I don't know, it depends how the season finishes."

"Anything could happen. Maybe I'll even go back to Vicenza."

"It would be great to finish my career where I



Roberto Baggio: Criticised Lippi.

started it.

"But that's just an idea. The only sure thing is that when I finish playing I'll go and live at home, close to Vicenza."

Baggio, 32, started his career at Vicenza in the early 1980s before establishing himself as one of Italy's top players at Fiorentina between 1985 and 1990. His move to Juventus in 1990 sparked riots in Florence.

Baggio played at the Turin club for five seasons, scoring 78 goals in 141 league matches and taking Italy almost single handedly to the 1994 World Cup final.

After two seasons at Milan he went to Bologna, where he rekindled his career and won a place in Italy's 1998 World Cup squad. He joined Inter after the tournament.

MATTHAUS FUTURE COACH — VOGTS

Former Germany coach Bert Vogts said last week he could see Lothar Matthaus taking the top job.

"Lothar could fill the role," Vogts told German television.

"He reads the game well and his experience is unique. It would be good for the German Football Federation."

Vogts stepped down in the wake of Germany's quarter-final

defeat by Croatia at last year's World Cup in France and was replaced by Erich Ribbeck.

The man who coached Germany to victory at the 1996 European championship said he felt Matthaus should have decided to stay with Bayern Munich until the end of the current season.

The 38-year-old Matthaus will leave the champions in March to join U.S.

Major League club New York-New Jersey MetroStars.

"It would have been better if he had stayed with Bayern and played a farewell game there after the European championship," Vogts said.

"It would have been better for Bayern and for German football."

Matthaus, who has a world-record equalling 143 caps, plans to retire from international soccer after next year's European championship finals in Belgium and the Netherlands.



Bert Vogts: Ex-coach believes Matthaus is ideal.

HEARTS CHASE COLLYMORE

Scottish premier league Hearts want to sign Stan Collymore on loan from Aston Villa, the English club said.

Villa manager John Gregory said on the club's official website: "Hearts have shown an interest in taking Stan but only on loan and we have left it up to the player."

Collymore became the most expensive player in English soccer when he joined Liverpool in 1995 for 8.5 million pounds (\$13.72 million) but his career has been dogged by negative publicity and depression.

Hearts manager Jim Jefferies confirmed that the Edinburgh club wanted the former England striker, but stressed

the bid to persuade him to join for a three-month period was still at an early stage.

"We have made a fresh inquiry about Stan," the website quoted Jefferies as saying.

"We spoke to Aston Villa and they have given us permission to speak to him, so it's now a question of whether he

wants to talk with us.

"The first time we went for him a couple of months back it fell through, but the idea to come back has come from their side and we have learned there is a possibility he will now come to us."

"I think our position is stronger than it was before, but there's still a bit to do yet."

Bill Hurley's Australian SPORTSBOOK

Phone: (02) 9897 0088 (see page 3 for more details)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Manchester United | \$1.90 |
| Arsenal | \$3.00 |
| Leeds | \$6.00 |
| Chelsea | \$13.00 |
| Liverpool | \$15.00 |
| Sunderland | \$41.00 |
| Tottenham | \$81.00 |
| West Ham | \$151.00 |
| Leicester | \$251.00 |
| Everton | \$501.00 |

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE RELEGATION

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Watford | \$1.07 |
| Bradford | \$1.12 |
| Sheff Wednesday | \$1.18 |
| Derby | \$3.00 |
| Southampton | \$7.00 |
| Wimbledon | \$11.00 |
| Aston Villa | \$13.00 |
| Coventry | \$17.00 |
| Middlesbrough | \$21.00 |
| Newcastle | \$21.00 |

TOP GOALSCORER

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Andy Cole | \$4.50 |
| Alan Shearer | \$5.00 |
| Dwight Yorke | \$10.00 |
| Dion Dublin | \$17.00 |
| Nwankwo Kanu | \$17.00 |
| Davor Sukor | \$34.00 |
| Michael Owen | \$51.00 |
| Steffan Iversen | \$51.00 |
| Ole-Gunner Solskjaer | \$51.00 |
| Robbie Fowler | \$101.00 |

EURO 2000 CHAMPIONSHIP

| | |
|----------------|----------|
| Holland | \$5.00 |
| Italy | \$6.50 |
| Spain | \$7.00 |
| France | \$8.00 |
| Germany | \$9.00 |
| England | \$13.00 |
| Sweden | \$17.00 |
| Czech Republic | \$17.00 |
| Yugoslavia | \$26.00 |
| Norway | \$26.00 |
| Portugal | \$26.00 |
| Romania | \$26.00 |
| Belgium | \$26.00 |
| Denmark | \$51.00 |
| Turkey | \$67.00 |
| Slovenia | \$126.00 |

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Barcelona | \$3.75 |
| Lazio | \$4.00 |
| Manchester United | \$6.00 |
| Chelsea | \$8.00 |
| Real Madrid | \$10.00 |
| Bayern Munich | \$13.00 |
| Fiorentina | \$17.00 |
| Valencia | \$21.00 |
| Porto | \$26.00 |
| Rosenborg | \$81.00 |
| Bordeaux | \$101.00 |
| Feyenoord | \$101.00 |
| Hertha | \$101.00 |
| Marseille | \$151.00 |
| Dynamo Kiev | \$151.00 |
| Sparta Prague | \$501.00 |

ITALIAN SERIE A 1999/2000

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| Lazio | \$2.60 |
| Juventus | \$3.75 |
| Inter Milan | \$5.00 |
| Roma | \$7.50 |
| AC Milan | \$8.00 |
| Parma | \$11.00 |
| Fiorentina | \$51.00 |

Euro 2000

EURO 2000

Euro 2000

Special Feature

ZOFF NEEDS TO INSPIRE ITALY

Dino Zoff has hauled Italy into the European Championships during his first year as coach but he urgently needs to breathe life into his squad if they are to mount a real challenge for next year's Euro 2000 title.

After a bright start in late 1998 under the former World Cup winning captain, Italy have been sliding downhill in 1999.

Last week they suffered the humiliation of being left out of the seedings in the draws for both the World Cup qualifiers and the European championships.

The rot set in at the end of March when the three-time World champions were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Belarus. Those were the first points the Italians had dropped in their Euro 2000 campaign.

A month later they were held to a dull 0-0 draw by Croatia.

A convincing 4-0 win over Wales and a draw in Switzerland took Italy to the brink of qualification in June and left them needing a single point from their final two matches against Denmark and Belarus.

But they then threw away a 2-0 lead to lose 3-2 to Denmark in an extraordinary match in Naples and limped into next year's competition courtesy of a 0-0 draw in Minsk.

If further proof were needed of the sorry state of the Italian national side it came last month when Zoff's men were beaten 3-1 at home by one of their hosts next year, Belgium.

"Poor Zoff, poor Italy," ran a huge banner headline in

Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper the day after that debacle. "This Italy makes us blush."

SOLID DEFENCE

Given Zoff's dour conservatism and his goalkeeping instincts, it is perhaps not surprising that his side's strengths lie in defence.

Parma's Fabio Cannavaro and Lazio's Alessandro Nesta have established themselves as a young but wholly reliable centreback pairing since they emerged at the 1998 World Cup and only the recent return from injury of Juventus defender Ciro Ferrara threatens to split them.

On the flanks, evergreen captain Paolo Maldini shows few signs of his age and will start perhaps his last big competition for Italy with the enormous experience of over 100 caps.

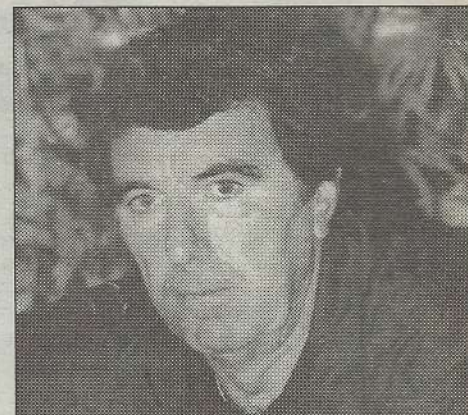
Zoff has resurrected Christian Panucci's international career at right back and overseen a transition in goal. Parma's Gianluigi Buffon and Fiorentina's Francesco Toldo have now taken over from Angelo Peruzzi and Gianluca Pagliuca as Italy's number one goalkeepers.

MIDFIELD PROBLEMS

The world's costliest player Christian Vieri and his close friend Filippo Inzaghi will probably start Euro 2000 as Zoff's first choice forward pairing but Enrico Chiesa, Vincenzo Montella and above all Alessandro Piero — so disappointing at France 98 — are also in the frame.

But it is in midfield that Italy are struggling and Zoff's solid defence have found no effective way of channelling the ball to his exciting forwards.

Dino Baggio and Demetrio Albertini are not the players they once were while Luigi Di Biagio, Italy's best midfielder at



Dino Zoff: Needs to breathe new life into Italy.

the World Cup, has faded since he moved from AS Roma to Inter Milan.

Zoff may choose to place his faith in a new generation of midfielders and playmakers including Parma's Paolo Vanoli, Juventus' Gianluca Zambrotta and Roma's Francesco Totti.

LOSS OF PRESTIGE

Zoff, like his predecessor Cesare Maldini, says the national side is being squeezed out of Italian football by the race for the Serie A title and the mushrooming Champions League.

Playing for the Azzurri appears to be losing prestige. "Certainly that seems to be the case," says Azeglio Vinici, who coached Italy at the 1990 World Cup and is now vice-president of the Football Federation's technical sector.

"Maybe it has something to do with the prestige with which the domestic championship is viewed and the fact that there are now some 200 foreign players in Serie A," he said.

"Certainly that makes it more difficult for the coach of the national side than it did in my day."



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ITALY: PAST EURO CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS

Previous appearances: 4 (1968, 1980, 1988, 1996)

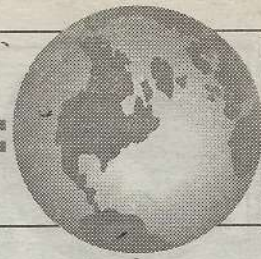
Honours: Champions 1968; Hosts 1968

Overall playing record in the finals

| | | P | W | D | L | F | A |
|------|---------------------------------------|----|-----|-----------------------------------|---|----|---|
| 1960 | Did not enter | 14 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 11 | 7 |
| 1964 | Eliminated in qualifying competition | | | | | | |
| 1968 | SF Soviet Union (Naples) | D | 0-0 | (Italy won on the toss of a coin) | | | |
| | F Yugoslavia (Rome) | D | 0-0 | | | | |
| | F Yugoslavia (Rome) - replay | W | 2-0 | Riva, Anastasi | | | |
| 1972 | Eliminated in qualifying competition | | | | | | |
| 1976 | Eliminated in qualifying competition | | | | | | |
| 1980 | R1 Spain (Milan) | D | 0-0 | | | | |
| | R1 England (Turin) | W | 1-0 | Tardelli | | | |
| | R1 Belgium (Rome) | D | 0-0 | | | | |
| | QF Czechoslovakia (Naples) | D | 1-1 | Graziani | | | |
| | (Czechoslovakia won 9-8 on penalties) | | | | | | |
| 1984 | Eliminated in qualifying competition | | | | | | |
| 1988 | R1 West Germany (Frankfurt) | D | 1-1 | Mancini | | | |
| | R1 Spain (Frankfurt) | W | 1-0 | Vialli | | | |
| | R1 Denmark (Cologne) | W | 2-0 | Altobelli, De Agostini | | | |
| | SF Soviet Union (Stuttgart) | L | 0-2 | | | | |
| 1992 | Eliminated in qualifying competition | | | | | | |
| 1996 | R1 Russia (Liverpool) | W | 2-1 | Casiraghi 2 | | | |
| | R1 Czech Republic (Liverpool) | L | 1-2 | Chiesa | | | |
| | R1 Germany (Manchester) | D | 0-0 | | | | |
| 2000 | Qualified as Group One winner | | | | | | |

Note: Up to and including 1976, the competition was known as the European Nations Cup. From 1960-76 four teams qualified for the finals. From 1980-1992 eight teams qualified for the finals.

In 1996 16 teams qualified for the finals. The results listed here include only matches played in the final series as detailed above.



OWEN NOT RATTLED

England striker Michael Owen is refusing to let media criticism depress him and insists he will soon return to the sparkling form he displayed in the 1998 World Cup.

The Liverpool forward, who was 20 last week, said he had always expected a media backlash after the fulsome praise he received early in his career.

Criticism has followed a five-month lay-off because of a hamstring injury and a loss of form since his return to action in the early weeks of the current season.

Yet Owen, speaking at the launch of a video about his early life and rise to England's team, has shown there is a wise head on his young shoulders and admits to easily deflecting press attacks.

"I had a lot of highs at a young age and I knew then I would get a couple of lows as well," he said. "In the first cou-

ple of years everyone was saying how good I was and talking about what I could be for the future.



Michael Owen: Knows what he can do.

"Then you have an injury and a loss of form and the tables are reversed and people are saying what you can't do. I knew the criticism would come sooner rather than later and I'm glad it's come at this early age and I would say I've learned how some people can be.

"That's the thing in this country. You are either praised over the top or someone has a go at you — and that's normally over the top as well."

Asked whether the harsh words in English newspapers hurt him, Owen said: "Not really as I don't think I have anything to prove to people — especially those close to me.

"I know what I can do and I've done it at the highest level.

"I don't feel I need to answer to anyone else. I'm doing this for myself and Liverpool Football Club and when I pull on an England shirt for my country as well."

HAMPDEN PARK BAILED OUT

Scotland's cash-strapped Hampden Park soccer stadium was saved last week from financial turmoil by a 4.4 million pound (\$7.11 million) rescue package.

The 55,000-seat stadium, threatened with receivership after an ambitious revamp ran millions of pounds over budget, has been offered a bail-out put together by Scotland's new government, Sports Minister Sam Galbraith said.

The Scottish Executive will put two million pounds into the stadium, while



the balance will come from various local government groups.

Galbraith said that Hampden owners Queen's Park Football Club had agreed to the deal. The Scottish Football Association will pay the club 800,000 pounds annually to run the stadium for the next 10 years.

"Despite the mistakes and misjudgements which have been made by the project we have a magnificent national football stadium," Galbraith said.

Hampden was recently selected to stage the European Cup final in 2002.

BEN JOHNSON COACHES GADDAFI'S SON

Banned Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson has started training Al-Saad, son of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and a member of Libya's national soccer squad.

"Johnson and his team arrived last week in Benghazi and they immediately started training Al-Saad. Johnson had been recommended to Al-Saad by Diego Maradona," a Libyan sports official contacted from Tunis said.

Johnson's agent Morris Chrobotek said last week the deal to provide strength and power training to Al-Saad and his teammates over the next three months was worth about \$35,000.

He said he believed the Libyan deal would lead to a new career for Johnson as a trainer.

But the Libyan official said no deal had been yet concluded.

"I believe there will be a test with training for Al-Saad. Any decision for Johnson to train the Libyan soccer team would be taken later," he said.

The Jamaican-born Johnson, who turns 38 this month, was stripped of his 1988 Olympic gold and 9.79 second world record time when he tested positive for steroids at Seoul's Games.

He was banned for life after a 1993 test showed high testosterone levels. He trained Argentinian soccer player Maradona in his 1997 comeback.

"I want to be the best (soccer) player in Africa within one or two years," Al-Saad said recently.

Libyan sports officials said Libya plans an African soccer tournament in the coastal city of Benghazi on December 23 with the participation of Ghana, Cameroun, Togo and Gabon.



Ben Johnson: Recommended by Maradona.

TV GUIDE

All times are Australian Eastern Standard Summer Time

Wednesday 22 December
English Premier League Show
Fox Sports
7.30pm - 9pm

European Soccer Show
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 12)
10pm - 11pm

Thursday 23 December
English FA Cup Round Three
Teams TBA (LIVE)
Fox Sports
6am - 9.30am

English FA Cup Round Three
Replay of morning match
Fox Sports
4.30pm - 6.30pm

Spanish Soccer
Fox Sports
8.30pm - 10.30pm

Soccer Central
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 12)
9pm - 10pm

Friday December 24
Spanish Soccer (Replay)
Fox Sports
10am - 12pm

German Bundesliga
Kaiserslautern v Freiburg
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 13)
3pm - 5pm

Soccer Scene
Fox Sports
5.30pm - 6.30pm

English Premier League
Replay last weeks games
Fox Sports 2
11.55pm - 6am

Saturday December 25
Soccer Scene (Replay)
Fox Sports
12pm - 1pm

Scottish Premier League
Fox Sports
1pm - 3pm

English Premier League (Replay)
SBS TV
5.30pm - 6.30pm

Sunday December 26
German Bundesliga
Kaiserslautern v Freiburg



Optus Vision (C7 Sport 12)
10am - 12pm

Italian Serie A
SBS TV
10.30am - 11.30am

French Premier League
Auxerre v PSG
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 13)
4pm - 6pm



English First Division:
West Bromwich v Manchester City (LIVE)
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 12)
11pm - 1am

English Premier League
Coventry v Arsenal (LIVE)
Fox Sports
4.30am - 7.30am
(Monday Morning)

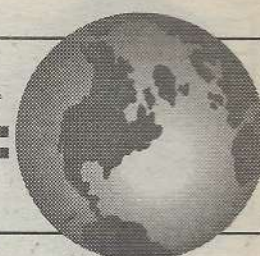
Monday December 27
English Premier League
Coventry v Arsenal (Replay)
Fox Sports 2
12pm - 2pm

Best Of English Soccer
Optus Vision (C7 Sport 12)
5.00pm - 6.00pm

English Premier League
Fox Sports
5pm - 6pm

English Premier League
SBS TV
7.30pm - 8.30pm

Scottish Premier League
Celtic v Rangers (LIVE)
Fox Sports 2
11pm - 2.30am



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Chelsea 0 Leeds United 2, Arsenal 1 Wimbledon 1, Aston Villa 2 Sheffield Wednesday 1, Bradford City 2 Newcastle United 0, Leicester City 0 Derby County 1, Liverpool 2 Coventry City 0, Middlesbrough 2 Tottenham Hotspur 1, Sunderland 2 Southampton 0, Watford 1 Everton 3, West Ham United 2 Manchester United 4.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|-------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|-----|
| 1. Leeds United | 18 | 13 | 2 | 3 | 32 | 19 | 41 |
| 2. Manchester Utd | 17 | 12 | 3 | 2 | 44 | 23 | 39 |
| 3. Sunderland | 18 | 11 | 4 | 3 | 33 | 17 | 37 |
| 4. Arsenal | 18 | 11 | 3 | 4 | 32 | 17 | 36 |
| 5. Liverpool | 18 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 26 | 14 | 33 |
| 6. Leicester City | 18 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 26 | 24 | 29 |
| 7. Tottenham Hot. | 17 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 26 | 22 | 27 |
| 8. Middlesbrough | 18 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 23 | 25 | 27 |
| 9. West Ham Utd | 17 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 19 | 18 | 25 |
| 10. Chelsea | 16 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 21 | 17 | 24 |
| 11. Everton | 18 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 28 | 28 | 24 |
| 12. Aston Villa | 18 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 16 | 20 | 22 |
| 13. Coventry City | 18 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 23 | 20 | 21 |
| 14. Wimbledon | 18 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 28 | 30 | 21 |
| 15. Newcastle | 18 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 28 | 32 | 19 |
| 16. Southampton | 17 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 20 | 27 | 17 |
| 17. Bradford City | 17 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 15 | 25 | 16 |
| 18. Derby County | 18 | 4 | 3 | 11 | 16 | 29 | 15 |
| 19. Watford | 18 | 3 | 2 | 13 | 14 | 36 | 11 |
| 20. Sheffield Wed | 17 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 15 | 42 | 6 |

LEADING SCORERS

18 - Kevin Phillips (Sunderland)
12 - Alan Shearer (Newcastle United), Andy Cole (Manchester United)
10 - Michael Bridges (Leeds United), Dwight Yorke (Manchester United)
9 - Dion Dublin (Aston Villa)
8 - Steffen Iversen (Tottenham Hotspur), Tony Cottee (Leicester City), Kevin Campbell (Everton), John Hartson (Wimbledon), Paolo Di Canio (West Ham United)
7 - Muzzy Izzet (Leicester City), Nwankwo Kanu (Arsenal), Marians Pahars (Southampton), Robbie Keane (Coventry City), Niall Quinn (Sunderland), Brian Deane (Middlesbrough)
6 - Rory Delap (Derby County), Hamilton Ricard (Middlesbrough), Titi Camara (Liverpool), Carl Cort (Wimbledon)

ENGLISH DIVISION ONE

Sheffield United 2 Blackburn 1, Barnsley 3 Walsall 2, Bolton 0 Stockport 1, Crystal Palace 0 Fulham 0, Huddersfield 3 Grimsby 1, Ipswich 3 West Bromwich 1, Manchester City 3 Swindon 0, Nottingham Forest 1 Crewe 0, Portsmouth 0 Port Vale 0, Queens Park Rangers 0 Charlton 0, Tranmere 1 Norwich 2, Wolverhampton 2 Birmingham 1.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | PTS |
|--------------------|----|----|----|---|----|----|-----|
| 1. Huddersfield | 23 | 14 | 4 | 5 | 42 | 23 | 46 |
| 2. Manchester City | 23 | 14 | 3 | 6 | 35 | 19 | 45 |
| 3. Ipswich | 23 | 12 | 6 | 5 | 40 | 26 | 42 |
| 4. Charlton | 22 | 12 | 5 | 5 | 38 | 24 | 41 |
| 5. Barnsley | 22 | 12 | 3 | 7 | 42 | 35 | 39 |
| 6. Stockport | 23 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 28 | 30 | 37 |
| 7. Fulham | 23 | 8 | 11 | 4 | 24 | 18 | 35 |
| 8. Queens Park | 23 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 32 | 28 | 33 |
| 9. Birmingham | 22 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 33 | 25 | 32 |
| 10. Wolverhampton | 22 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 25 | 21 | 32 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 11. Bolton | 23 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 32 | 27 | 31 |
| 12. Norwich | 22 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 21 | 20 | 31 |
| 13. Blackburn | 22 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 27 | 22 | 30 |
| 14. Tranmere | 23 | 8 | 5 | 10 | 32 | 34 | 29 |
| 15. West Bromwich | 23 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 23 | 27 | 26 |
| 16. Crystal Palace | 23 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 30 | 36 | 26 |
| 17. Crewe | 23 | 7 | 5 | 11 | 23 | 30 | 26 |
| 18. Grimsby | 23 | 7 | 5 | 11 | 24 | 38 | 26 |
| 19. Nottingham Ft | 23 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 24 | 27 | 25 |
| 20. Sheffield United | 23 | 6 | 6 | 11 | 27 | 39 | 24 |
| 21. Port Vale | 23 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 26 | 31 | 23 |
| 22. Portsmouth | 23 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 25 | 36 | 22 |
| 23. Walsall | 23 | 4 | 7 | 12 | 21 | 37 | 19 |
| 24. Swindon | 23 | 3 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 37 | 17 |

ENGLISH DIVISION TWO

Colchester 3 Luton 0, Bristol City 0 Wycombe 0, Bournemouth 4 Oxford Utd 0, Burnley 2 Cardiff 1, Cambridge Utd 2 Oldham 3, Chesterfield 0 Gillingham 0, Millwall 1 Notts County 0, Preston 3 Blackpool 0, Reading 2 Wrexham 2, Scunthorpe 0 Bury 2.

ENGLISH DIVISION THREE

Rochdale v Peterborough pp, Barnet 0 Mansfield 0, 2 Halifax 1 Exeter 1 Hartlepool 2, Hull 2 Carlisle 1, Lincoln 1 Shrewsbury 2, Macclesfield 1 Leyton Orient 0, Rotherham 2 Darlington 1, Swansea 2 Brighton 0, Torquay v Cheltenham pp, Northampton 1 Plymouth 1, York 2 Southend 2.

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Hearts 0 Hibernian 3. Played Saturday: Celtic 4 Dundee United 1, Dundee v Aberdeen postponed, Kilmarnock 1 St Johnstone 2, Motherwell 1 Rangers 5.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|-----|
| 1. Rangers | 15 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 43 | 13 | 40 |
| 2. Celtic | 17 | 13 | 0 | 4 | 52 | 15 | 39 |
| 3. Dundee United | 18 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 24 | 26 | 30 |
| 4. Motherwell | 17 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 28 | 30 | 27 |
| 5. Hibernian | 19 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 30 | 33 | 24 |
| 6. Hearts | 17 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 26 | 27 | 20 |
| 7. St Johnstone | 17 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 17 | 22 | 19 |
| 8. Dundee | 16 | 6 | 0 | 10 | 20 | 27 | 18 |
| 9. Kilmarnock | 17 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 16 | 26 | 12 |
| 10. Aberdeen | 17 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 17 | 54 | 9 |

LEADING SCORERS

16 - Mark Viduka (Celtic)
11 - Billy Dodds (Rangers, 9 for Dundee United)
9 - Michael Mols (Rangers), Gary McSwegan (Hearts)
8 - John Spencer (Motherwell)
7 - Henrik Larsson (Celtic), Willie Falconer (Dundee), Nathan Lowndes (St Johnstone), Russell Latapy (Hibernian), Eyal Berkovic (Celtic), Jorg Albertz (Rangers)
6 - Jonatan Johansson (Rangers), Lee McCulloch (Motherwell)
5 - Lubomir Moravcik (Celtic), Dirk Lehmann (Hibernian), Kenny Miller (Hibernian)
4 - Claudio Reyna (Rangers), Franck Sauzee (Hibernian), Colin Cameron (Hearts), Christophe Cocard (Kilmarnock), Rod Wallace (Rangers), Stephane Adam (Hearts), Mixu Paatelainen (Hibernian), Mark Burchill (Celtic), Joaquim Ferraz (Dundee United).

ITALIAN SERIE A

Cagliari 0 Lecce 0, Fiorentina 1 Juventus 1, Lazio 2 Piacenza 0, AC Milan 2 Reggina 2, Parma 2 AS Roma 0, Perugia 3 Bologna 2, Torino 0 Udinese 1, Bari 2 Inter Milan 1, Verona 1 Vicenza 0.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|----------------|----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| 1. Lazio | 14 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 30 | 13 | 31 |
| 2. Juventus | 14 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 17 | 7 | 29 |
| 3. Parma | 14 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 27 | 17 | 27 |
| 4. AS Roma | 14 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 26 | 14 | 25 |
| 5. AC Milan | 14 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 29 | 19 | 24 |
| 6. Inter Milan | 14 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 24 | 12 | 23 |
| 7. Bari | 14 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 17 | 17 | 20 |
| 8. Perugia | 14 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 16 | 18 | 20 |
| 9. Udinese | 14 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 19 | 22 | 19 |
| 10. Fiorentina | 14 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 15 | 17 | 18 |
| 11. Lecce | 14 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 11 | 21 | 18 |
| 12. Bologna | 14 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 11 | 13 | 17 |
| 13. Verona | 14 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 11 | 19 | 16 |
| 14. Torino | 14 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 17 | 14 |
| 15. Reggina | 14 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 15 | 23 | 12 |
| 16. Piacenza | 14 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 16 | 11 |
| 17. Venezia | 14 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 9 | 19 | 9 |
| 18. Cagliari | 14 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 12 | 25 | 7 |

LEADING SCORERS

11 - Hernan Crespo (Parma)
10 - Andriy Shevchenko (AC Milan)
7 - Gabriel Batistuta (Fiorentina), Filippo Inzaghi (Juventus), Marcelo Salas (Lazio), Christian Vieri (Inter Milan)
6 - Cristiano Lucarelli (Lecce), Oliver Bierhoff (AC Milan), Mohamed Kallon (Reggina), Marco Delvecchio (AS Roma), Roberto Muzzi (Udinese)
5 - Giuseppe Signori (Bologna), Sebastian Veron (Lazio), Vincenzo Montella (AS Roma), Filippo Maniero (Venezia)
4 - Yksel Osmanovski (Bari), Patrick Mboma (Cagliari), Ivan Zamorano (Inter), George Weah (Milan), Francesco Totti (AS Roma), Adailton (Verona)
3 - Duccio Innocenti (Bari), Daniele Berretta (Cagliari), Alvaro Recoba, Ronaldo (Inter), Alen Boksic, Simone Inzaghi, Sinisa Mihajlovic and Dejan Stankovic (Lazio), Marco Di Vaio and Alain Boghossian (Parma), Nicola Amoruso, Renato Olive (Perugia), Arturo Di Napoli, David Dionigi (Piacenza), Marco Ferrante (Torino), Paolo Poggi (Udinese), Fabian Valtolina (Venezia).

SPANISH FIRST DIVISION

Athletic Bilbao 2 Real Zaragoza 2, Barcelona 2 Atletico Madrid 1, Real Betis 1 Real Mallorca 0, Malaga 0 Real Sociedad 0, Numancia 2 Racing Santander 1, Oviedo 4 Sevilla 2, Valencia 3 Rayo Vallecano 1, Deportivo Coruna 1 Celta Vigo 0, Real Madrid 2 Espanyol 1, Valladolid 1 Alaves 1.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|----------------------|----|----|---|---|----|----|-----|
| 1. Deportivo | 16 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 32 | 17 | 36 |
| 2. Celta Vigo | 16 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 22 | 17 | 28 |
| 3. Real Zaragoza | 16 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 30 | 17 | 27 |
| 4. Barcelona | 16 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 35 | 25 | 26 |
| 5. Alaves | 16 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 20 | 18 | 25 |
| 6. Rayo Vallecano | 16 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 25 | 24 | 25 |
| 7. Valencia | 16 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 23 | 16 | 24 |
| 8. Numancia | 16 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 25 | 27 | 23 |
| 9. Real Betis | 16 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 16 | 26 | 23 |
| 10. Real Mallorca | 16 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 22 | 22 | 22 |
| 11. Athletic Bilbao | 16 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 23 | 24 | 22 |
| 12. Real Madrid | 16 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 26 | 28 | 20 |
| 13. Espanyol | 16 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 25 | 26 | 19 |
| 14. Racing Santander | 16 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 24 | 25 | 18 |
| 15. Real Sociedad | 16 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 19 | 21 | 18 |
| 16. Malaga | 16 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 24 | 27 | 17 |
| 17. Atletico Madrid | 16 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 24 | 31 | 17 |
| 18. Real Oviedo | 16 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 16 | 24 | 17 |
| 19. Valladolid | 16 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 15 | 23 | 17 |
| 20. Sevilla | 16 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 18 | 26 | 13 |

LEADING SCORERS

16 - Savo Milosevic (Real Zaragoza)
15 - Salva Ballesta (Racing Santander)
13 - Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Atletico Madrid)
11 - Catanha (Malaga)
9 - Raul Gonzalez (Real Madrid), Diego Tristan (Real Mallorca), Roy Makaay (Deportivo Coruna)
8 - Dani Garcia (Barcelona)
7 - Juan Carlos Gomez (Sevilla), Rivaldo (Barcelona), Ruben Navarro (Numancia), Djalminda (Deportivo Coruna), Victor Fernandez (Valladolid), Pauleta Resnddes

UEFA CUP FOURTH ROUND DRAW

1. Parma (Italy) v Werder Bremen (Germany)
2. Juventus (Italy) v Celta Vigo (Spain)
3. AS Roma (Italy) v Leeds United (England)
4. Real Mallorca (Spain) v Monaco (France)
5. Slavia Prague (Czech Republic) v Udinese (Italy)
6. Borussia Dortmund (Germany) v Galatasaray (Turkey)
7. Atletico Madrid (Spain) v Lens (France)
8. Arsenal (England) v Deportivo La Coruna (Spain)

First legs to be played on March 2, second legs March 9.

Draw for quarter-finals:

| | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| Winners match 4 | v | Winners match 6 |
| Winners match 8 | v | Winners match 1 |
| Winners match 2 | v | Winners match 7 |
| Winners match 3 | v | Winners match 5 |

Quarter-finals to played March 16 and 23.



(Deportivo Coruna)

6 - Finidi George (Real Betis), Rodrigo Fabri (Valladolid),

Fernando Morientes (Real Madrid)

5 - Juan Sanchez (Valencia), Dely Valdes (Oviedo), Miguel

Angel Benitez (Espanyol), Santi Ezquerro (Athletic Bilbao), Valery Karpin (Celta Vigo), Vassilis Tsartas (Sevilla), Jovan Stankovic (Real Mallorca), Joseba Etxeberria (Athletic Bilbao), Patric Kluivert (Barcelona), Alfonso Perez (Real Betis), Manuel Canabal (Rayo Vallecano), Bolo Perez (Rayo Vallecano).

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Hansa Rostock 1 Schalke 04 0, Borussia Dortmund 4 Hertha Berlin 0, SSV Ulm 3 Eintracht Frankfurt 0, Hamburg SV 6 MSV Duisburg 1, TSV 1860 Munich 2 Kaiserslautern 1, SC Freiburg 1 VfL Wolfsburg 1, Bayer Leverkusen 2 SpVgg Unterhaching 1, Werder Bremen 0 Bayern Munich 2, Arminia Bielefeld 1 VfB Stuttgart 2

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|-------------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|-----|
| 1. Bayern Munich | 17 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 33 | 13 | 36 |
| 2. Bayer Leverkusen | 17 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 29 | 18 | 34 |
| 3. Hamburg SV | 17 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 39 | 19 | 31 |
| 4. TSV 1860 Munich | 17 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 28 | 21 | 29 |
| 5. Borussia Dortmund | 17 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 24 | 13 | 28 |
| 6. VfB Stuttgart | 17 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 21 | 19 | 27 |
| 7. Werder Bremen | 17 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 34 | 24 | 26 |
| 8. Kaiserslautern | 17 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 21 | 30 | 23 |
| 9. Hertha Berlin | 17 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 22 | 28 | 22 |
| 10. Schalke 04 | 17 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 21 | 20 | 21 |
| 11. VfL Wolfsburg | 17 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 22 | 30 | 21 |
| 12. SC Freiburg | 17 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 24 | 23 | 20 |
| 13. SpVgg Unterh. | 17 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 18 | 20 | 20 |
| 14. Hansa Rostock | 17 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 23 | 35 | 20 |
| 15. SSV Ulm | 17 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 19 | 25 | 19 |
| 16. MSV Duisburg | 17 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 18 | 30 | 13 |
| 17. Eintracht Frankfurt | 17 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 17 | 27 | 11 |

18. Arminia Bielefeld 17 2 5 10 13 31 11
Note: League resumes on February 4 after winter break.

LEADING SCORERS

9 - Adel Sellimi (SC Freiburg)

8 - Marco Bode (Werder Bremen), Ulf Kirsten (Bayer Leverkusen),

Martin Max (TSV 1860 Munich), Ebbe Sand (Schalke 04)

7 - Ailton, Claudio Pizarro (both Werder Bremen), Jonathan Akpoborie (VfL Wolfsburg), Hans-Joerg Butt (Hamburg SV), Elber (Bayern Munich), Tony Yeboah (Hamburg SV)

DUTCH DIVISION ONE

Graafschap Doetinchem 1 Ajax Amsterdam 1, Utrecht 3 Feyenoord 4, PSV Eindhoven 0 Heerenveen 1, Fortuna Sittard 3 Vitesse Arnhem 3, Twente Enschede 2 Roda JC Kerkrade 1, AZ Alkmaar 1 NEC Nijmegen 1, Willem II Tilburg 0 Sparta Rotterdam 0.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|----------------------|----|----|---|---|----|----|-----|
| 1. PSV Eindhoven | 17 | 12 | 2 | 3 | 53 | 14 | 38 |
| 2. Heerenveen | 17 | 12 | 1 | 4 | 34 | 17 | 37 |
| 3. Ajax Amsterdam | 17 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 47 | 24 | 36 |
| 4. Feyenoord | 17 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 33 | 18 | 33 |
| 5. Twente Enschede | 17 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 30 | 17 | 33 |
| 6. AZ Alkmaar | 18 | 10 | 2 | 6 | 36 | 28 | 32 |
| 7. Vitesse Arnhem | 18 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 35 | 27 | 32 |
| 8. Willem II Tilburg | 17 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 30 | 32 | 30 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| 9. Roda JC Kerkrade | 17 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 29 | 23 | 29 |
| 10. RKC Waalwijk | 18 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 30 | 35 | 29 |
| 11. Utrecht | 18 | 7 | 1 | 10 | 28 | 35 | 22 |
| 12. Sparta Rotterdam | 17 | 5 | 1 | 11 | 25 | 38 | 16 |
| 13. NEC Nijmegen | 17 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 21 | 35 | 15 |
| 14. Graafschap Doet. | 18 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 18 | 28 | 14 |
| 15. MVV Maastricht | 17 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 25 | 41 | 12 |
| 16. Fortuna Sittard | 18 | 2 | 5 | 11 | 20 | 33 | 11 |
| 17. Den Bosch | 17 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 16 | 44 | 10 |
| 18. Cambuur Leeu. | 16 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 15 | 35 | 9 |

LEADING SCORERS

22 - Ruud van Nistelrooy (PSV Eindhoven)

17 - Pierre van Hooijdonk (Vitesse Arnhem)

11 - Mariano Bombarda (Willem II Tilburg) Richard Knopper (Ajax Amsterdam)

10 - Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink (Twente Enschede)

9 - Brian Laudrup (Ajax) John Bosman (AZ Alkmaar) Luc Nilis (PSV) Rick Hoogendorp (RKC Waalwijk) Barry van Galen (AZ Alkmaar) Bob Peeters (Roda JC Kerkrade)

8 - Nikos Machlas (Ajax) Anthony Lurling (Heerenveen)

FRENCH FIRST DIVISION

Monaco 1 Montpellier 0, Olympique Lyon 2 Metz 0, Olympique Marseille 1 Racing Lens 2, Nancy 1 St Etienne 0, Nantes 1 Bastia 1, Sedan v Le Havre and Racing Strasbourg v Troyes postponed due to flooded pitches, Girondins Bordeaux 1 Stade Rennes 0, AJ Auxerre 1 Paris St Germain 0.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 1. Monaco | 20 | 13 | 3 | 4 | 41 | 17 | 42 |
| 2. Olympique Lyon | 20 | 11 | 4 | 5 | 25 | 18 | 37 |
| 3. Paris St Germain | 20 | 11 | 3 | 6 | 30 | 22 | 36 |
| 4. AJ Auxerre | 20 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 26 | 23 | 34 |
| 5. Girondins Bord. | 20 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 31 | 29 | 30 |
| 6. St Etienne | 20 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 30 | 28 | 29 |
| 7. Sedan | 19 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 27 | 28 | 28 |
| 8. Olympique Mars. | 20 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 27 | 25 | 26 |
| 9. Bastia | 20 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 25 | 23 | 26 |
| 10. Stade Rennes | 20 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 26 | 26 | 26 |
| 11. Troyes | 19 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 22 | 28 | 26 |
| 13. Nantes | 20 | 7 | 3 | 10 | 22 | 24 | 24 |
| 12. Metz | 20 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 22 | 21 | 23 |
| 14. Nancy | 20 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 26 | 28 | 23 |
| 15. Racing Stras. | 19 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 19 | 27 | 23 |
| 16. Racing Lens | 20 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 17 | 26 | 23 |
| 17. Le Havre | 19 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 19 | 31 | 19 |
| 18. Montpellier | 20 | 3 | 5 | 12 | 20 | 32 | 14 |

LEADING SCORERS

14 - Sonny Anderson (Olympique Lyon)

13 - Marco Simone (Monaco)

12 - David Trezeguet (Monaco), Alex (St Etienne)

10 - Stephane Guivarc'h (AJ Auxerre), Sylvain Wiltord (Girondins Bordeaux)

9 - Lilian Laslandes (Girondins Bordeaux), Tony Cascarino (Nancy)

8 - Mickael Madar (Paris St Germain), Shabani Nonda (Rennes)

7 - Antoine Sibierski (Nantes), Florian Maurice (Olympique Marseille), Christian (Paris St Germain), Frederic Nee (Bastia)

BELGIAN CUP ROUND 16

(Roman numerals denote division of non-first division club): Mons (III) 2 Lommel 0, Waregem (IV) 0 Ghent 2 Genk 8 Ingelmunster (II) 1 Antwerp (II) 1 Lierse 2 - after extra time Lokeren 4 Mechelen 0 Mouscron 0 Sint-Truiden 0 - after extra time (Sint-Truiden won 4-1 on penalties) Standard Liege 2 Westerlo 1 Eendracht Aalst v Germinal Beerschot postponed.

YUGOSLAV FIRST DIVISION

Zeleznik Belgrade 1 Sartid Smederevo 0, Rad Belgrade 2 Hajduk Kula 0, Red Star Belgrade 3 Milicionar Belgrade 2, Zemun Belgrade 2 Mogren Budva 0, Buducnost Podgorica 0 Obilic Belgrade 2, OFK Beograd Belgrade 2 Vojvodina Novi Sad 0, Radnicki Kragujevac 0 Proleter Zrenjanin 0, Spartak Subotica 2 Hajduk Belgrade 0, Radnicki Nis 3 Cukaricki Belgrade 0, Sutjeska Niksic 2 Partizan Belgrade 2.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|-----|
| 1. Obilic | 20 | 17 | 2 | 1 | 39 | 12 | 53 |
| 2. Partizan | 20 | 16 | 3 | 1 | 49 | 17 | 51 |
| 3. Red Star | 20 | 14 | 5 | 1 | 45 | 13 | 47 |
| 4. Milicionar | 20 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 32 | 25 | 31 |
| 5. Rad | 20 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 31 | 25 | 30 |
| 6. Zeleznik | 20 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 25 | 21 | 29 |
| 7. Sutjeska | 20 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 28 | 33 | 28 |
| 9. Buducnost | 19 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 23 | 21 | 27 |
| 9. OFK Beograd | 20 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 29 | 31 | 27 |
| 10. Vojvodina | 20 | 8 | 2 | 10 | 27 | 27 | 26 |
| 11. Radnicki (K) | 20 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 19 | 25 | 26 |
| 12. Cukaricki | 19 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 21 | 24 | 25 |
| 13. Zemun | 20 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 26 | 36 | 25 |
| 14. Radnicki (N) | 20 | 7 | 2 | 11 | 26 | 30 | 23 |
| 15. Hajduk (B) | 20 | 7 | 2 | 11 | 33 | 38 | 23 |
| 16. Proleter | 20 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 17 | 22 | 23 |
| 17. Hajduk (K) | 20 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 15 | 22 | 23 |
| 18. Mogren | 20 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 18 | 33 | 22 |
| 19. Spartak | 20 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 13 | 33 | 17 |
| 20. Sartid | 20 | 4 | 4 | 11 | 18 | 29 | 16 |
| 21. Borac | 20 | 3 | 3 | 14 | 26 | 43 | 12 |

LEADING SCORERS

14 - Bogic Popovic (Hajduk Belgrade)

13 - Sasa Ilc (Partizan Belgrade)

12 - Mateja Kezman (Partizan)

10 - Branko Jelic (Red Star Belgrade), Malesija Vojvoda (Radnicki Nis), Milan Radojicic (Milicionar Belgrade)

9 - Mihailo Pjanovic (Red Star), Gaborijel Radojicic (Obilic Belgrade), Nemanja Dancetovic (Milicionar)

PORTUGUESE FIRST DIVISION

Rio Ave 2 Boavista 1, Uniao Leiria 1 Salgueiros 4, Belenenses 3 Santa Clara 1, Campomaiorense 0 Vitoria Setubal 1, Alverca 4 Gil Vicente 2, Vitoria Guimaraes v Benfica ko2100gmt, Sporting Lisbon 4 Maritimo 2, Sporting Braga 0 Estrela Amadora 1.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|----------------------|----|----|---|---|----|----|-----|
| 1. Sporting Lisbon | 15 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 26 | 14 | 33 |
| 2. Porto | 14 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 28 | 8 | 31 |
| 3. Benfica | 14 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 22 | 10 | 30 |
| 4. Boavista | 15 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 17 | 12 | 27 |
| 5. Maritimo | 15 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 20 | 14 | 25 |
| 6. Estrela Amadora | 15 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 18 | 14 | 24 |
| 7. Gil Vicente | 15 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 22 | 18 | 23 |
| 8. Vitoria Guimaraes | 14 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 22 | 17 | 22 |
| 9. Belenenses | 15 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 17 | 13 | 21 |
| 10. Alverca | 15 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 17 | 20 | 20 |
| 11. Rio Ave | 15 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 18 | 23 | 17 |
| 12. Salgueiros | 15 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 13 | 20 | 17 |
| 13. Santa Clara | 15 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 18 | 23 | 14 |
| 14. Braga | 15 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 18 | 23 | 14 |
| 15. Campomaiorense | 15 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 12 | 22 | 14 |
| 16. Farense | 14 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 23 | 12 |
| 17. Vitoria Setubal | 15 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 13 | 26 | 12 |
| 18. Uniao Leiria | 15 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 12 | 22 | 10 |

HUNGARIAN FIRST DIVISION

Kispest-Honved 2 Ferencvaros 3, Gazszer 1 Ujpest 4.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|--------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|-----|
| 1. Dunaferr | 17 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 44 | 15 | 36 |
| 2. Vasas Budapest | 17 | 11 | 1 | 5 | 32 | 16 | 34 |
| 3. MTK Budapest | 17 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 30 | 14 | 33 |
| 4. Ujpest Budapest | 17 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 32 | 20 | 30 |
| 5. Debrecen | 17 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 25 | 18 | 29 |
| 6. Gazszer | 17 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 23 | 22 | 28 |
| 7. Tatabanya | 17 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 20 | 19 | 26 |
| 8. Ferencvaros | 17 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 27 | 17 | 25 |
| 9. Gyor ETO | 17 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 28 | 18 | 24 |
| 10. Zalaegerszeg | 17 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 21 | 13 | 24 |
| 11. Haladas Szom. | 17 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 18 | 26 | 18 |
| 12. Diosgyor | 17 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 17 | 27 | 18 |
| 13. Nyirseg Spart. | 17 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 15 | 30 | 17 |
| 14. Kispest-Honved | 17 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 16 | 22 | 16 |
| 15. Nagykanizsa | 17 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 22 | 15 |
| 16. Siofok | 17 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 13 | 27 | 14 |
| 17. Szeged | 17 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 13 | 38 | 14 |
| 18. Vac | 17 | 1 | 5 | 11 | 15 | 39 | 8 |

Note: Hungarian league restarts March 1 after winter break. Note: Siofok were deducted three points for failing to fulfil their fixture against Nyirseg Spartacus on September 18.

In addition Nyirseg Spartacus were awarded the match 3-0 by the Hungarian F.A.

SOUTH AFRICAN FIRST DIVISION

Ajax Cape Town 0 Mamelodi Sundowns 2, AmaZulu 1 Wits University 1, Manning Rangers 0 Orlando Pirates 1, Moroka Swallows 2 Free State Stars 1, Umtata Bush Bucks 1 Bloemfontein Celtic 0, Classic 5 Hellenic 4, Kaizer Chiefs 2 Mother City 0, Santos 2 Jomo Cosmos 2, SuperSport United 0 African Wanderers 1.

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 1. Mamelodi Sun. | 17 | 13 | 3 | 1 | 38 | 14 | 42 |
| 2. Orlando Pirates | 18 | 11 | 6 | 1 | 36 | 13 | 39 |
| 3. Kaizer Chiefs | 20 | 10 | 7 | 3 | 26 | 11 | 37 |
| 4. Classic | 20 | 11 | 2 | 7 | 35 | 36 | 35 |
| 5. Hellenic | 20 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 43 | 23 | 32 |
| 6. Manning Rangers | 17 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 26 | 23 | 29 |
| 7. Ajax Cape Town | 20 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 21 | 23 | 27 |
| 8. Wits University | 20 | 5 | 11 | 4 | 20 | 16 | 26 |
| 9. African Wanderers | 19 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 20 | 27 | 25 |
| 10. Santos | 20 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 30 | 37 | 24 |
| 11. Bloemfontein | 20 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 26 | 35 | 24 |
| 12. Free State Stars | 18 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 14 | 16 | 23 |
| 13. Moroka S. | 21 | 6 | 5 | 10 | 21 | 33 | 23 |
| 14. Jomo Cosmos | 19 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 22 | 20 | 22 |
| 15. AmaZulu | 20 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 15 | 24 | 20 |
| 16. Umtata Bush | 20 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 21 | 29 | 20 |
| 17. SuperSport Utd | 21 | 4 | 6 | 11 | 21 | 31 | 18 |
| 18. Mother City | 20 | 2 | 3 | 15 | 15 | 39 | 9 |



NATIONAL LEAGUE

| | Total | | | | | | | Home | | | | | | | Away | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|---|---|---|----|----|-----|------|---|---|---|----|----|--|------|---|---|---|----|----|--|
| | P | W | D | L | F | A | PTS | P | W | D | L | F | A | | P | W | D | L | F | A | |
| SYDNEY OLYMPIC | 12 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 21 | 9 | 26 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 6 | | 6 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 3 | |
| CARLTON | 12 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 26 | 13 | 24 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 7 | | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 12 | 6 | |
| PERTH GLORY | 12 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 26 | 16 | 21 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 17 | 9 | | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 7 | |
| WOLLONGONG WOLVES | 12 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 23 | 17 | 21 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 7 | | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 12 | 10 | |
| BRISBANE STRIKERS | 12 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 18 | 12 | 21 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 13 | 7 | | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 5 | |
| MARCONI STALLIONS | 12 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 16 | 17 | 20 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 7 | | 7 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 10 | |
| NEWCASTLE BREAKERS | 12 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 18 | 17 | 19 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 11 | 10 | | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 7 | |
| AUCKLAND KINGZ | 12 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 22 | 23 | 16 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 14 | | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 9 | |
| PARRAMATTA POWER | 12 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 19 | 20 | 15 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 9 | | 5 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 9 | 11 | |
| SOUTH MELBOURNE | 12 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 19 | 20 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 15 | 6 | | 6 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 14 | |
| GIPPSLAND FALCONS | 12 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 13 | 13 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 8 | |
| MELBOURNE KNIGHTS | 12 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 14 | 23 | 13 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 6 | | 6 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 17 | |
| NORTHERN SPIRIT | 12 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 18 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 8 | | 7 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 10 | |
| CANBERRA COSMOS | 12 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 15 | 22 | 11 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 8 | | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 14 | |
| ADELAIDE CITY FORCE | 12 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 11 | 16 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 7 | | 7 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 9 | |
| SYDNEY UNITED | 12 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 17 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 8 | | 5 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 9 | |

AUCKLAND KINGZ 3

(Ngata 45pen & 70pen, Perry 86)

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 3

(Kelic 35, 56, Vassallo 76)

Venue: North Harbour Stadium **Crowd:** 3,572 **Referee:** G Connolly
Cautions: Nastevski (MK) 6 & 68, Mennillo (AK) 12 & 45, John (MK) 69.

Red Cards: Mennillo (AK) 45, Nastevski (MK) 68.

Teams: **Auckland Kingz:** Batty, Bunce, Stergiopoulos, Rufer, de Jong, Mennillo, Middleby (Riddle 85), Ngata, Osman (Perry 51), Vicelich (Van Steeden 85), Jones.

Melbourne Knights: John, Rajher (Magdic 46), Kovacevic, Vukadin, Silic (Vassallo 74), Nastevski, Kelic, Bannini, Kiratzoglou, Reda, Cervinski.

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 3

(Buonavoglia 19, Pryce 24, Dodd 44)

PERTH GLORY 2

(Despotovski 28, Halpin 34)

Venue: Breakers Stadium **Crowd:** 4,127 **Referee:** C Diomis
Cautions: Harwell (PG) 45, Roberts (NB) 45, Wiecezorek (NB) 65, T Halpin (PG) 82

Teams: **Newcastle Breakers:** Catlin, Pryce, Roberts, McManus, Sprod (Smith 70), Dodd, Wilson, Buonavoglia, Wiecezorek (Tancheski 78), Harper, Moore.

Perth Glory: Petkovic, Trajkovski (Alkos 79), Harwell, Naven, Junior, Miller (Wehrman 69), Edwards, Boutsianis, Despotovski, Halpin.

NORTHERN SPIRIT 0

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 3

(Mori 33, 59, 79)

Venue: North Sydney Oval **Crowd:** 6,106 **Referee:** S Micallef
Cautions: Moss (NS) 44, Brain (ACF) 78.

Teams: **Northern Spirit:** Perosh, Enes, Bingley, Slater, Cranney (Lyons 46), Moss, Culina, Arnold, Sobczyk, Griffiths (Cunico 66), Saad (Perinich 40).

Adelaide City FC: Knezevic, Tobin, Talladira, Mori, Veart, Sabljak, Brain, Kemp, Costanzo, Hassell (Cartwright 86), Pelosi.

GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0

MARCONI STALLIONS 2

(Maloney 74, Zoric 89)

Venue: Falcons Park **Crowd:** 2,245 **Referee:** P Mur
Cautions: Maloney (MS) 4, AVargas (GF) 18, Renaud (MS) 71.
Red Card: Longo (MS) 83

Teams: **Gippsland Falcons:** Jevdjjevic, Fak, Gotis, Durakovic, MacNicol, Vargas, Bell, Puca (Katz 83), Hutchinson, Savage, Nilo (Kakos 71).

Marconi Stallions: Turnbull, Gibson, Longo, Care, Babic (Trajanovski 82), Maloney, Smith, Farah, Karl (Awaritefe 62), Renaud, Zoric.

LEADING GOALSCORERS

| | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---|
| P Foster | (Brisbane Strikers) | 9 |
| A Moreira | (Carlton SC) | 9 |
| J Buonavoglia | (Newcastle Breakers) | 7 |
| M Curcija | (Sth Melbourne) | 7 |
| S Petrovski | (Wollongogn Wolves) | 7 |
| C Boutsianis | (Perth Glory) | 6 |
| P Cardozo | (Sydney olympic) | 6 |
| B Despotovski | (Perth Glory) | 6 |
| J Griffiths | (Parramatta Power) | 6 |
| I Kelic | (Melbourne Knights) | 6 |
| A Marth | (Carlton SC) | 6 |

ABSW PLAYER OF THE YEAR

(PROGRESSIVE POINTS)

SEE PAGE 15

ROUND THIRTEEN

Thursday 23 December: South Melbourne v Wollongong Wolves Bob Jane Stadium 7.30pm.

Tuesday 28 December: Sydney United v South Melbourne Sydney United Sports Centre 5pm, Perth Glory v Marconi Stallions Perth Oval 5pm, Melbourne Knight v Gippsland Falcons Kinghts Stadium 6pm, Brisbane Strikers v Wollongong Wolves Suncorp Metway Stadium 7pm, Canberra Cosmos v Northern Spirit Bruce Stadium 7.30pm, Parramatta Power v Sydney Olympic Parramatta Stadium 7.30pm, Carlton SC v Newcastle Breakers 7.30pm Olympic Park, Adelaide Force v Auckland Kingz Hindmarsh Stadium 7.30pm
(all times provided are local times)

SYDNEY UNITED 1

(Bosevski 70)

PARRAMATTA POWER 2

(Eagleton 20, Sterjovski 58)

Venue: Sydney Utd Sports Centre **Crowd:** 4,565 **Referee:** M Breeze
Cautions: Kupresak (SU) 14, Arrarte (SU) 21, Ardone (PP) 36, Angelucci (PP) 52, Bosevski (SU) 64, Barrett (PP) 65, Podeljak (SU) 89.

Red Cards: Blagojevic (PP) 39, Younis (SU) 51.

Teams: **Sydney United:** Hughes: Kupresak (Bozinovski 86), Bosnar, T. Maric (Younis 46), J. Moric: Rastall, Savocca, Genc, Arrarte, Ponderjak, Bosevski.

Parramatta Power: Crews: Barrett, Vrkic, Blagojevic, Byrnes, Eagleton: Ardone, Bennett, Burns: Sterjovski (Erich 89), Angelucci. (Townsend 67).

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2

(Emerton 43, Cardozo 59)

BRISBANE STRIKERS 0

Venue: Belmore Sports Ground **Crowd:** 5,245 **Referee:** M Shield
Cautions: Meredith (BS) 18 & 87, Foster (BS) 38, Mendez (SO) 69.

Red Cards: Meredith (BS) 87

Teams: **Sydney Olympic:** Bouhoutsos, Zoricich, Baillie, Juric, Arambasic, Cardozo (Jomaa 89), Emerton, Mendez, Wilson, Zorbas (Kalantzis 70), Tome (Carle 76).

Brisbane Strikers: Bolton, Gwynne, Bell (Stefanuto 73), Ditton, Pilic (Baldwin 80), Foster, Dwyer, McLaren, Grierson, Harris (Di Losa 66), Meredith.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 3

(Petrovski 15, 83, Chipperfield 77)

CANBERRA COSMOS 0

Venue: Brandon Park **Crowd:** 2,497 **Referee:** D Dwight
Cautions: Spencer (WW) 14, Roberts (CC) 20, Popovich (CC) 60, Chipperfield (WW) 62.

Teams: **Wollongong Wolves:** Pogliacomi, Ceccoli, Stanton, Cervinski (Souris 78), Horsely, Reid, Surjan, Young (Masi 83), Chipperfield, Spencer (Huxley 74), Petrovski.

Canberra Cosmos: Barlow, Milin (Burt 75), Popovich, Polak, Winnie, Musitano (Kolpak 68), James, Hooker, Roberts, DeJesus, Gonzalez (Prenzoski 68).